

THE MONTH

NOVEMBER, 1939

Vol. CLXXIV SEVENTY-SIXTH YEAR

No. 905

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THE MONTH

VOL. CLXXIV NOVEMBER, 1939

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EDITORIAL COMMENTS

Blue and White Papers

IT is unnecessary to refer at great length to the Blue Book and the supplementary White Paper recently issued by His Majesty's Stationery Office. Their contents will be sufficiently familiar. The documents therein assembled, together with the lucid reports and commentary of Sir Nevile Henderson, tell their story with such vividness and precision that no one can seriously call in question where the war-guilt lies. The Prime Minister's statement that war had been forced upon an unwilling Europe by the unreasonable ambitions of one man receives ample confirmation from the British Ambassador's narrative. The pretence of sending terms of settlement to Poland which were deemed to have been rejected before ever they had reached the people to whom they were addressed, is now exposed as a flimsy and thoroughly dishonest manoeuvre. The White Paper makes it abundantly obvious that Herr Hitler had resolved to invade Poland, and that no peaceful agreement, however favourable to the German claims, would have satisfied him. He wanted not merely to gain his end, but to achieve that end by means of war. "It is scarcely credible," such is the judgment of Sir Nevile Henderson, "that he would have acted as he did, if bloody war rather than a bloodless peace, had not seemed the fairer prospect for him." His resolution, it appears, had been taken as early as March of this year: all manoeuvring since then had the sole purpose of creating favourable circumstances and inducing the Western Powers to abandon Poland to its fate. The occasion originally chosen for the invasion was apparently that of the Tannenberg anniversary celebrations (August 26th): the further delay of seven days was due to "one last hesitation" in Herr Hitler's mind, caused by letters from Mr. Chamberlain: but the hesitation took the form of one final effort to dissociate Great Britain from Poland. The Ambassador's impression was "that the corporal of the last War was even more anxious to prove what he could do as a conquering Generalissimo in the next." When Poland was actually in-

vaded on September 1st and the German Chancellor had committed himself to the monstrous falsehood that he had been compelled to take up arms "in defence of the Reich," the verdict of the White Paper is as follows: "The die had, in fact, been cast, and never can there have been or ever be a case of more deliberate and carefully planned aggression."

A Dictator's Tragedy

UNDERLYING Sir Nevile Henderson's report is an acute commentary on the progress of Nazi-ism and upon the inevitable deterioration of a leader who is responsible to no other men. Many of Herr Hitler's reforms, in spite of their complete disregard of personal liberty of thought, are commended as having been "on highly advanced democratic lines" (possibly not the happiest of compliments). Much of this legislation, it is maintained, may well survive in a newer and better world in which Germany, once recovered from her present fever, will again play a leading part. The report hazards the judgment that revolutions are like avalanches which, once set in motion, cannot stop until they crash to destruction at the appointed end of their career. However true or untrue be this generalization, there were many outside Germany who viewed the Nazi experiment in its infancy with a measure of approval and sympathy. It did talk, at least to some extent, in terms of European values, was anti-Marxist and seemed rather a counter-revolution after the manner of Signor Mussolini or General Franco: and counter-revolutions are not subject in the same degree to the law of avalanches. One hoped that, after an initial period of ferment, the saner elements would prevail and a more moderate policy be pursued. Unfortunately, this hope has been consistently disappointed. Power has bred ruthlessness and aggression: opposition, not tolerated from the beginning outside the movement, became later intolerable within it. Men bold enough to give utterance to opinions contrary to those of Herr Hitler—Marshal von Blomberg, for example, Baron von Neurath, Generals Fritsch and Beck—were gradually shed until finally the Führer was surrounded by "mere yes-men" whose flattery and advice were soothing but highly dangerous. After February, 1938, Herr Hitler became more and more cut off from external counsel and a law unto himself. Sir Nevile Henderson thinks that we are inclined to over-emphasize the sinister influence of men like von Ribbentrop, Goebbels and

Himmler. Evil their influence assuredly was, but not, however, for what they proposed, since Herr Hitler decided policy, nor even because they applauded and encouraged him, but for the reason that, whenever the Führer appeared to hesitate, these party extremists proceeded to create a situation calculated to drive him into the very course before which he was hesitating. But he was in no real sense their instrument: initiative and responsibility alike were his.

An Evil Counsellor

ONE exception has to be made to this assertion. Herr Hitler may be a master of mass psychology in his own country, but he is little acquainted with the psychology of other peoples and their probable reactions to his various moves. He has no knowledge of languages other than his own and, except for two official visits to Italy, has never travelled abroad. To remedy these shortcomings he made the fatal blunder of relying upon Herr von Ribbentrop who had spent several years in Canada, and who, during his short period as Ambassador in London, consistently failed to understand the English people even as he consistently angered them by his want of diplomatic manners. If report be true, notes Sir Nevile Henderson, he gave his Führer thoroughly false counsels in respect of England, "while his successes in other spheres induced Herr Hitler to regard him more and more as a second Bismarck, a conviction which Herr von Ribbentrop probably shared to the full." A commentary upon this unfortunate man's incompetence is to be found in his constant assurance that Great Britain would in no circumstances oppose German aggression by recourse to arms: an equally clear proof of his dishonesty and untruthfulness is his Danzig accusation, which he, of all men, must know to be completely false, that this war was being systematically prepared for years by the present British Government.

German Disappointments

ANY comment upon the existing international situation needs to be prefaced with the expression "as we write" or "in the moment of writing": it is difficult to look ahead, impossible to prophesy. The German leaders have made as yet no irrevocable decision, or at least have not yet acted upon it. In Germany, profound disappointment must be felt in many quarters: for example, at the compulsory return of the

German population from the Baltic States and the non-return of the Southern Tyrolese, the majority of whom will apparently choose their native valleys and an alien citizenship rather than the questionable advantages offered by the Reich : at the *rapprochement* with the Soviet Communists whose doctrines hitherto had been strenuously pilloried as Enemy Ideology No. 1 : at the prospect of a prolonged war with Great Britain whose friendship Nazi Germany would have gladly enjoyed. A stormy interview with the Chancellor on August 29th was closed, the White Paper tells us, "by a brief, and in my opinion quite honest, harangue on Herr Hitler's part in regard to the genuineness of his constant endeavour to win Britain's friendship, of his respect for the British Empire, and of his liking for Englishmen generally." In the Ambassador's judgment, he courted Great Britain assiduously both as representing "the aristocracy and the most successful of the Nordic races," and as constituting the most serious obstacle to his own far-reaching plan of German domination in Europe : and in spite of what he regarded as constant rebuffs, he persisted in his endeavours till the end. A genuine Anglo-German understanding would have been, and, it is to be hoped, will one day be, of immense service to Europe : impossible, however, to achieve it in any permanent form, given Herr Hitler's mentality and on Herr Hitler's terms. With the Soviets, on the other hand, no association was considered tolerable. As lately as April 1, 1939, in a speech at Wilhelms-haven, he loudly proclaimed his detestation of Communism. Every country, he insisted, would have to face the problems which Germany, and more recently Spain, had been forced to deal with. "State after State will either succumb to the Jewish Bolshevik pest or will ward it off," and he added that he was convinced that finally "this worst form of bolshevistic threat" would be crushed. Events have shown that April 1st was a most suitable occasion for this particular address. Since then, Germany has gone to Moscow, and with Russian assistance the Polish campaign was brought to a speedy conclusion. But Germany has had the humiliation of being out-manceuvred at her own game of *Lebensraum* : she now sees herself excluded from the northern Baltic and must strongly suspect that any further advance eastwards will encounter Soviet resistance as well as that of the smaller States.

The Soviet Danger

IT is interesting to notice the reaction of various newspapers and political sections in this country to the Russian movement westwards, now that the initial shock of the Russo-German agreement has been absorbed. By many it has been hailed—somewhat to our mystification—as a move for peace. It is most probable that the Soviets have no desire to be involved in a serious war, but they have always nourished the hope that Communism could be spread through the armed clash of so-called capitalist Powers. The combatants thoroughly exhausted, they would then be the sole or the chief gainers. This technique was clearly exemplified during the war in Poland. They played the jackal to the German lion, and the jackal managed to secure a good portion of the lion's share. If Germany was the principal aggressor, the Soviet action was more treacherous, more characteristically underhand. Making cunning use of the situation which Germany had created, the Soviets borrowed the German "pincer" movement, with one claw reaching across the Baltic States towards Scandinavia, and the other, motionless as yet, is ready to move in the direction of the Balkans. But—they may urge—is not this an advantage for the Western Powers? Does it not ultimately spell disaster for Germany? Perhaps it does—in the long run: but this is not the kind of disaster one would wish for Germany or any other Power. The Reich has shown itself a danger and, in many ways, a disgrace while it was brown: if that brown were changed to red, both danger and disgrace would be intensified. One of the most serious charges that can be levelled against Germany's present rulers is that, in their anxiety to secure for themselves the fruits of aggression, they have sold the pass to the enemy of everything that is meant by European tradition and civilization. Herr Hitler is fond of referring to the historic mission of his country: that mission, particularly before the centre of gravity shifted from south to north, from Vienna to Berlin, included the all-important element of defence against the East: and never was such defence more necessary than to-day. These leaders have now opened the door to the Eastern peril with consequences to themselves that may well prove disastrous. But that would be no gain for us.

The Soviets Essentially Anti-religious

IT is also suggested that the Soviets, in annexing a part of Poland and taking the Baltic States under their protection, were reviving a national and imperialist spirit, were acting as Slavs and not as Communists. We would soon witness a tension, no longer between Nazi and Bolshevik, but between German and Slav. In this new spirit Russia would resume the role of big brother to the smaller Slav States, the Czechs and Serbs and Bulgars. All this, it was contended, was to the good if it helped to curb Germany. Unfortunately, this supposed new spirit showed itself in the seizure of the territory of a smaller Slav brother with whom incidentally Russia's relations were fraternal only after the manner of Cain and Abel. It was suggested further that if the Soviets commenced to think and act as a national State, their attitude towards religion might be altered. A leading article in the *Pravda* for August 20th, written in connexion with the XVIIIth Congress of the Communist Party, rules out this supposition so completely that it calls for fuller reference. The article reminds us that religion was the sign of an oppressed people and that to-day in Soviet Russia it is a mere remnant of the past with no place in the economy and social structure of the nation. It asserts that the spread of atheism and the overthrow of an outworn system of belief have always accompanied the victory of true Socialism. Lenin's statement is repeated that the struggle against religion is the A.B.C. of all materialism, and consequently of Marxism. So far, so bad: we have heard it many times over. But it is well to recall the facts now that certain persons are regarding Russia as a kindly uncle indulging in political benevolence in Eastern Europe. It is not this or that form of religion which is opposed, Orthodox or Catholic, not abuses and exaggerations that are being denounced: Communism denies and militantly denies God and religion of any and every kind. This was so where Communism controlled in Spain, it is so where it seeks to control in Mexico. It was not a case of opposing the Catholic Church *qua* Church and allowing full liberty to a few harmless Protestant sects, though this pretence was tried in Barcelona and Mexico City; it was, and remains, what Mr. Evelyn Waugh, in his Mexican volume "Robbery under Law," aptly terms "the straight fight," a fight, that is, between religion and its complete denial.

A State Matter

THE *Pravda* article makes the serious complaint that certain traces of the "capitalist" spirit still exist in Soviet minds, and that one of the commonest and most persistent of such relics is religion. Religious rites and customs are still observed and valued, festivals are organized, especially in country districts. All this, the article assures us, lowers the dignity of Soviet man. These feasts, etc., "produce in him a sense of defeatism and passivity, and hamper the development of creative energy and of initiative. They enervate revolutionary vigilance and hatred of the class enemy." The relics of religion are harmful because the authority of God and of religion are used to sanction and stiffen the reactionary elements in men's minds: such as ancient customs, the strength of tribe relationships, the capitalist outlook on labour, the lack of comradeship towards women, a servile ethic and the rest. Various Communist organizations, including district committees and the Press, are censured for this unsatisfactory condition of affairs. Many "have failed to grasp that anti-religious propaganda is an integral and essential component of all politico-instructive, cultural-educative work, and of the whole activity of the party." Many Soviet organs, it is insisted, "do not understand that anti-religious propaganda in our country is a *matter of State*. Thus, for example, the organs of the People's Commissariat for Public Instruction and Schools often fail to impart anti-religious education to the children so that some of them leave the Soviet school still harbouring religious ideas. The district committees are negligent in carrying out Soviet legislation, and frequently wink at transgressions of Soviet law on the part of priests or at their attempts to circumvent Soviet legislation for their own advantage." Finally, the Press is reprimanded for thinking it sufficient to have anti-religious articles twice a year, at Easter and Christmas. The XVIIIth Congress demanded a thorough revision and strengthening of anti-religious propaganda: specialists of every kind must be enrolled "to saturate the entire Soviet and party cultural programme with the anti-religious spirit, thereby elevating this neglected section of the cultural front to its proper political level."

The Pact with Turkey

THE recently signed Pact between Turkey and Great Britain and France may prove to have been an event of the greatest importance. Strategically, it helps to close the Eastern end of the Mediterranean. Though its motives are political, it reveals a Moslem resentment of the aggression in Central Europe, more particularly when it be remembered that Arabs and Moslem Indians have registered a like disapproval. It may also assist the formation of a Balkan bloc of States with a greater possibility of resistance to further aggression. There is some irony in the thought that the Balkan countries are all at peace and anxious to remain so, whereas a large part of Europe is almost "balkanized." The Mediterranean is at the moment a sea of peace: and there is no reason why it should not remain in that enviable condition. Spain has been estranged from Germany owing to the Russo-German Pact. Popular feeling in Italy is certainly not in sympathy with Germany, and any further development of German power on the Continent would scarcely be welcome to Italy's rulers. Her influence has been largely ousted from the Danube basin and might be challenged seriously in the Balkans in the event of another German advance towards the South-East. The violent attack in Marshal Balbo's paper, *Corriere Padano*, on Marshal Voroshiloff and the Russians, which stated that "we are born anti-Communist and wish to remain so. We refuse a grain of esteem or an ounce of sympathy to the Bolsheviks who are models of gross bestiality . . ." cannot have been pleasant reading in Berlin: there may well have been the intention that it should not. On the other side, there is no tradition of recent friendship between Italy and Turkey, though the latter Power is now making friendly approaches to the former. As we have frequently hinted, Italy's position is a key one. The Italians claim that they will remain neutral, but that they will act in defence of, and in accordance with, their national interests. We can repair much of the folly of our estrangement by seeing that their national interests march, wherever possible, with our own. What is certain is that the Catholic tradition which is still so strong in that country will have regarded with indignation and horror the wanton invasion of Poland and the cowardly delivery of millions of Christian Poles to the Soviet terror.

Propaganda

TRUTH lies—the old saying has it—at the bottom of a well; if we and others are to have a good view of it, the water must be clear. Unfortunately, the cuttlefish, bred nowadays for propaganda purposes, have got into the well (let this be sea-water if you must have the parallel exact) and are fouling it with their inky poison of lies and hate. Most neutral countries are aware how dirty the water has become and they doubtless also know which of the nations has been specializing in this type of fish. Some process of decontamination must, however, be employed if they are to see the truth. Another proverb reminds us that truth has a lovely face but is frequently badly dressed: and there are reasons for suspecting that the Ministry of Information is not yet a very skilled costumier. It is very necessary that the case of the Allies be explained fairly and honourably to the world. In itself, this should present no great difficulty. Smaller European nations know from what quarter they have to anticipate aggression; the Catholic countries must naturally be opposed to Nazi-ism in many of its manifestations, and the great majority of Americans, though they desire quite rightly to remain neutral, have a more obvious sympathy with the Western Powers than with Germany. But it is not enough to plead a case even if you plead it eloquently: you have to remember the jurors before whom you are maintaining it. This implies neither falsehood nor distortion, but merely a choice of the appropriate ideas and terms. Many of the letters published during the last month in *The Times* and elsewhere have been admirably conceived as far as the British and possibly the American mind are concerned. But frequently they have been too abstract, too woolly, too obviously couched in "liberal" language to make a strong impression on the average European. It is useless to talk of a United States of Europe when the European States do not want it or, if you prefer, are not sufficiently mature for such a project. Unwise to harp too forcibly on "democracy" when to most of those countries this means a system they have tried—imperfectly, if you please—and found thoroughly unsuitable. Rather should it be emphasized that we stand for the right of countries to live their own life and enjoy their native culture without the constant dread of interference from a ruthless stronger Power, for the need of honesty and honour in international dealings. Liberty, culture and religion—these are

ideas which ought to be emphasized, for it is their existence that is being threatened by the twin peril from North and East.

Constructive not Destructive

AND yet can a war ever be said to be constructive? Is it not our major tragedy that we have been compelled to challenge force and aggression at last by an appeal to arms and still are conscious of the consequences war may bring? This war was unwanted, even if it be granted that, as far as this country and France were in question, it was unavoidable. Up to the moment of writing it has been waged in a purely defensive spirit except at sea. May we interpret it as a hopeful sign that Germany has for so long hesitated to commit herself to a general offensive and to inaugurate hostilities on a full scale? Impossible to say. Even the hysterical Danzig speech of Herr von Ribbentrop included the statement that Germany had nothing to demand of the Western Powers, except, of course, the restoration of her former colonies—a matter which might have been adjusted long ago had the requisite mutual confidence and respect existed. Whatever the future may bring, however hostilities develop, it will be necessary for the Catholic to bear two great principles in mind. In the first place, hatred must at all costs be avoided, and this is not easy of realization under the circumstances of modern war. And, secondly, he must think in constructive terms and look towards, and, where this be possible, work for, an era of greater decency and peace and justice than have been evidenced in the past few years. It is a melancholy experience to recall the slogans with which the War of 1914—1918 ended and to meditate how false they have been proved. It was "the war to end war," "to make the world safe" for decent human living, to create a world fit for the habitation of heroes. To-day there is glib talk of a newer and a better world to be inaugurated after the present strife. Please God it may be. But we cannot expect it until the millions upon millions of European Christians are united and determined in an effort to make their principles the norm and inspiration of public and international life. We have been hitherto easily discouraged, readily defeatist, far too prone to waive those principles for selfish interest or national sentiment. A better world there must be, there will be—but only at the price of sacrifice and great unselfishness and an attachment that must be almost heroic, to the Christian Faith and law.

THE FIRST THREE WEEKS

WHEN it was suggested that an article in a French magazine might help towards explaining what many felt as the enigmatic attitude of the English during the early weeks of war, a war which Mr. Gunther in "The High Cost of Hitler" finds "a very odd war indeed," we thought that we might at least try to solidify our own impressions (naturally, those of the "English" could never be got into one formula, nor was our mind nearly so homogeneous as the French one), if only because the day-before-yesterday at such times is forthwith forgotten, especially when its emotions had been such as all but to nullify each the other.

To us, declaration of war came, if not as relief, at least as anti-climax, because nothing new seemed to happen. Next to no flags : no crowd shouting that it wanted the King ; no spate of music-hall songs—if you heard young men singing, it was the last War's songs or even Albert Chevalier ; and if that was due to the shutting of theatres, I think the public annoyance was genuinely shot through with sympathy for the theatrical profession, thrown out of its job overnight. People had used up a good deal of their emotion over evacuation (we wish that someone would compile stories of its pleasanter incidents, which were many), A.R.P. eccentricities due to tasks being set to people who had had no training to tackle anything responsible whatsoever, and black-out experiments. But it was evident that "public annoyance" was deep-seated, and also different in quality from, so to say, Old Bill's rueful cheeriness and heroic grousing. Last year's nerviness which gave vogue to the disgusting word "jitters" seemed quieter : we seemed to notice less of the exodus of Jews and rich persons to Cornwall or Ireland, just when they should have been proud to put their houses and persons at the public service. Nor was there a crop of wild rumours—like the last War's "Russians" or "angels"—the more remarkable because the suppression of real news left the field open. On the whole, the war that had been recognized as inevitable, seemed, when it came, incredible, and also, as someone wrote to me, most "indigestible." The "years between" vanished : you felt as if the last War were only just over and had left you exhausted :

"Really we *can't* begin all those hospitals, prisoners' camps, cadets, retreats, over again!" The English certainly hated the idea of a war: so, judging by what everyone returning from Germany insisted on, did the Germans. Quite good Catholics in Germany had welcomed even the Nazi-Soviet agreement—"at least it will prevent a war!" Yet probably never was there here a war entered upon with less enthusiasm, indeed, *but with more conviction*. And this, in spite of what must have looked like our almost complete apathy about Poland. This was due to various causes. To begin with the less creditable ones—we suggest: our unplumbable ignorance of geography and, of course, of history: the Englishman's axiom that in proportion as a nation is unlike England, it is worse than England: a dim but real dislike for what is Catholic: and more sinister reasons which we shall risk touching upon at the end.

We can visualize little beyond Venice. The tragedy of "gallant little Belgium" shocked us—we hate bullying. But we could "see" it: many of us had been as far as Bruges! Refugees, and photographs, arrived immediately. But Poland? Honestly, I think that the very word suggested the polar regions. One lady asked a friend of ours if the Poles were Christians: another, if they were white. . . . Probably she thought they were a kind of Eskimo. Another, to cheer a Polish church, gave it a statue of the Holy Child of Prague. We had found it hard to believe that Mr. Lloyd George, at Versailles, thought that Riga was on the Adriatic; but now that Count Raczinsky has shown that Mr. Lloyd George still seems to use maps placing iron where none has ever been discovered, and wheat near the Pripet marshes where, of course, there is less than anywhere else, we can believe anything of him. Who, that likes Chopin's Polonaises, connects them with Poland in particular? And a place where names begin with Prz . . . !

Anyhow, our insularity had been given, during the last years, an overdose of the "furrin," and always in terms of bloodshed. No doubt we could not be expected to worry or even know about the Bolivia-Paraguay war; that was not only "Latin" but in "South America," which we think of as one place and in a state of chronic revolution. Yet, God knows, if even half of what we heard about that war, in progress while we were in Buenos Aires, was true, we ought to have wept tears of blood over what not only North America but our own

"interests" were responsible for. As for Mexico, our Reds began to make capital out of it: if we Catholics (unlike the Belgian ones) hardly attempted to get the truth through, that was partly because we knew so little, but also, because we, too, find it hard to care about what is distant, and dislike being made to feel uncomfortable. Did any of us go and look for himself? Did we invite a North American Catholic to come and tell us? If we had, would he have accepted? In the United States, how much of a truth-campaign about Mexico was set going? Long ago, Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith ("A Message from Sirius") and more recently Mr. Aldous Huxley ("Brave New World") did more to help us to guess the psychology of the delinquent priest and the Indian's hotch-potch worship (eagle-crucifix) than any Catholic did. Mr. Evelyn Waugh's "Robbery Under Law," though regarded as over-simplified, had real "punch," but arrived too late. From then on, all foreign news, Abyssinia and, of course, Spain, became material for propaganda (Mr. A. J. Mackenzie's "Propaganda Boom" is well worth reading on that general subject) and it was dreadful to see how even our great channels of news used tainted sources, or selected just what suited them, and implemented even when it should not have paid them to do so, the absurd dichotomy: "Fascism: Communism," and encouraged people to lump together Hitler, Mussolini, Franco and Salazar (and now Beck).

But the Nazi series was beginning. Our Reds could not disapprove much of the annexation of Austria: it, too, was thought of as a dictator's country, and Catholic at that, and anyway in reality "German." But Hitler did himself a bad turn in the eyes of all alike by his savage persecution of the Jews and then of the Czechs, who had strong Freemason allies. People began to differentiate Czechoslovakia from Hungary and even Yugoslavia: they almost learnt how to draw its preposterous outline. But in that grim September, our mingled sense of gratitude and ignominy surely began to develop into that heavily angered spirit with which we finally encountered the declaration of *this* war.

We had become aware of the Hitlerian technique—the initial whine about the maltreatment of German minorities: its echo, blatantly engineered within the locality in question: the caddish sneers at men of "lower culture" both before and (still more disgustingly) after "victory"—and here, alas! our ignorance of other nations or races prevented our seeing *how*

caddish those sneers were : had we but been able to begin to compare the indigenous culture of Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Poland, yes, and of Bavaria if you will, with the forms that were to be superimposed upon those hapless peoples, we must surely, surely, have felt infinitely more strongly than we did or do when confronted by mere "ideologies." The sneers were followed by threats ; and the threats by the brutal contradiction of every inconvenient statement ever made so far ; and this, by a *method* (already in use within Germany, it is true, but much hushed up over here) so savage that we did not think, the other day, that an aged destitute Polish refugee, trying (characteristically) to support three Polish children, was exaggerating when he said : "It is better to be an animal in England than a human now in Poland. You make your horse pull carts but you do not flog him. Your dog does not do even that ; but you do not kick him." But even he did not provide the sexually sadistic evidence that we have had direct from Austrian and German mothers about concentration- and labour-camps. Whether or no that sort of information reached England, or the United States, and was suppressed, I cannot affirm. But now that we can "listen" to Nazi propaganda within Germany, we can be astonished at nothing. Either it is very concrete, slapped down—"We have done so and so"—of this we cannot forthwith judge : or it concerns what is happening inside England, of which we *can* judge, and then we see it to be so fantastic that our surviving impression is one of despair that a nation should have been (one is forced to suppose) so long prevented from hearing anything that its tyrants do not wish it to, that it may actually believe what it does hear to be the truth, however grotesque.

On the top of all this came the Nazi agreement with the Soviets, an event which Hitlerism had insisted could never, never happen. Hitlerism was thus exhibited as, after all, perfectly opportunist. Nor was this surprising anyway to a Catholic. Rather, as the least probable persons have said to us : "Really the only impartial paper that we can read is the *Osservatore Romano*," so is it the Catholic Press to which we must doff our caps for having for long insisted that the wall between the Nazi and the Stalin tyrannies had worn so thin that at any moment it might film away into nothing. When Russia invaded Poland, our Left-Wing Press began by hymning this event as a deadly blow to Nazidom : we believed

little of that; and very soon those newspapers began to change their tune; Labour, the Liberals, the Right-Wing, were too unanimous: they are now changing it back; but this did not happen during those early weeks. What everyone had to acknowledge was that no Nazi promise was even meant to be kept. Politicians had at first played on our "gentlemanly instincts." "Do *trust* Hitler!" If we didn't, we were told we were being unsportsmanlike. But just then, a German was saying to an Englishman: "But of *course*, you can't trust *Governments*! They are *meant* to cheat one another if they can!" But worse—"Cannot the English *see* that Poland *must* be part of Germany's living-space?" "But what about Poland's living-space?" The German simply stared. As if so low-grade a race could even begin to talk about that, in presence of the German Fact... Such sentences came our way; but countless others of that sort must have reached others, so we became very fidgety when we heard about droppings of pamphlets and wondered how *that* would change a heart—for Christ's own preaching had to begin with an attempt to change a "heart." We seemed to be doing nothing even to draw off the pressure from Poland (it does not follow that we were not doing what we could—but it *may* follow that we were wrong in our estimate of states of mind present and future); and we did seem to be leaving all the resolute, clear-cut work to France. Hence, since no news was reaching us, and since someone provided us with the god-sent expression—the "boredom" of the first stages of this war (clergymen soon enough introduced it into their broadcast prayers . . .), we were forced to think less about the present than the future.

The future—Europe's; Germany's; our own. Europe's? We remembered that many had said that Pius XI despaired of Europe, and saw no more to be hoped for from America. We had indeed written that we contemplated with serenity a yellow Pope sending, from Tibet, black missionaries to rebuild the ruined spires of England: and we were asked to omit only the words "with serenity." (But surely—in all circumstances one should be serene . . .?)¹ As for Germany, we keep being told: "We have no quarrel with Germany, but

¹ We recall a story by Mr. Evelyn Waugh. Two men meet a Time-Mesmerist, so to say, who can put you, in Time, where you wish to be. One said: "Fifteen hundred years ago." The other: "1,500 years ahead." The former encountered St. Augustine's priests, saying Mass under an oak tree, I think. The other was captured amid the ruins of London, removed in a canoe (or motor-boat), and encountered a black Dominican saying Mass. The idea is correct, if not the details.

only with Hitler: get rid of him and his methods—all will be well.” But, what is to happen *next*? No one in his senses demands that Germany should have a *kind* of Government that France, England, the United States, would choose for themselves. Let no one jolly himself along with the word “democracy.” Lest I be in the least dishonest, may I say that I don’t believe it exists, or ever has existed anywhere (certainly not in England or in the United States), and probably can’t exist and possibly shouldn’t exist. But that is merely personal! To many observers, the German race has appeared like sand, requiring heavy pressure before it can solidify into sandstone. That is not to its discredit. If it be true, let it have its pressure, even if a similar system would drive the Englishman delirious. To me (I cannot avoid being personal here) that race seems also to require a *Maerchen*. I mean, a fairy-tale; even, a fairy-prince. Its philosophers have constantly flown off towards Brocken-spectres; its scientists and even its politicians, to metaphors—into what disarray would Mr. Chamberlain throw the entire House of Commons if he said that England could not tolerate “Macedonian conditions” on its colonial frontiers! The Thames has never created the lovely myths that the Rhine has; even though the poor Lorelei is being kicked off her hill, golden hair, golden comb and all, simply because luckless non-Aryan Heine wrote the song that we all of us learnt as *the* German idyll in our boyhood, yet we have to have a Siegfried Line, in homage to Wagner’s super-cad—the horrible thing is that Hitler is crazy about Wagner without seeing through him, nor perceiving that his Nietzschean hero brought all heaven, earth and hell down to ruins around his Self. But anyhow, we have to take that interim philosophy (or should I say, ideology?) into account. What we, during those first weeks, were wondering was: What will happen next in *Germany*? The one thing that we prayed *not*, was, Bolshevization. That, of course, is Russia’s hope. Idle, just now, to talk about German, or Rhinish, or Danubian federated States. But, alas! and alas! why didn’t we talk about that long ago? Our fault; France’s, and America’s.

Yet we are hardly less anxious about England. Obviously, in conditions like ours, orders have to be given, and they ought to be wholeheartedly obeyed, even though at first they are sweeping and require much correction. However, the country is already bureaucratic enough, and there is the habit

of putting authority into the hands of a multitude of inexperienced but self-satisfied men and women. More important still is the fact that we have in our country so many "Left-ists," emphatically *not* of the working class (in the sense in which that word is usually accepted), but the kind of ill-educated "intelligentzia" that act as evangelists for what one may call "H. G. Wells." These all belong to the "bourgeois" class that they sneer at; all too often they are schoolteachers. These are they for whom "left" books are produced, and as you might expect, they are extremely propagandist and fill up the minds of their children with formulas of a materialist and pacifist sort. That the leaders of this movement are sincere, active, and anxious to "Russianize" our land, we have no doubt.¹ It is possibly they who have engineered what we called the second *volte-face* of the "leftist" Press. It can now once more congratulate Russia for having "freed" the Western Ukraine and Byelo-Russia from their "former oppressive rule"; on having "chased out" (!) the capitalists and landlords and "set up their own rule"; and insist that the "reactionary imperialists in Britain and France are revealing more and more openly their anti-democratic and anti-Soviet aims." We should have feared that it was the other way round. Not only our civilians were puzzled by our seeming to leave military activity to the French and to be doing nothing to draw the shock off Poland—in this they were no doubt mistaken—still, they suffered from that impression which our "news" did nothing to alleviate: but what they could hardly have been wrong about was the rapid "soft-peddalling" of the Polish tragedy, and while they allowed that newspapers found

¹ I would not feel safe in asserting, as some do, that various "plots" have been set on foot: that the fear of invasion from the air has been deliberately fostered by those who wish to make a fortune off petrol; nor again that our Leftist secularists have engineered an "air-panic" (which very few ordinary people feel, I am sure) *in order to* get children evacuated and therefore out of the hands of the home and family, let alone away so far as possible from religious influences: no doubt we are told that the Federation of Progressive Individuals and Societies, composed largely of schoolteachers and civil servants, has vigorously urged town-evacuation, and of course the Air Raid Defence League, directed by Sir A. Salter who also belongs to the Council of "P.E.P.," Political and Economic Planning. Certainly the ruin of so many small businesses, which leaves the big ones relatively intact, is a tragedy, and makes for one of the preliminaries of Communism which has already been used elsewhere, especially since most landowners are already half-ruined. But even so, I fear I should have to think that our country is clearer-headed and more active than it is, for a "plot" about all this to exist or to be vigorously "worked." Or is it precisely because most of us are muddle-headed and easy-going that a few clear-headed and determined men have a very good chance of imposing their will upon even a thoroughly reluctant country?

no more "story" in that appalling event, they feared that something of the sort was being *ordered* lest Russia, still being wooed, might be ruffled. Shall we put it thus—Our Reds would like the war to stop now, simply because Russia has seized enormous territories (much of them, incidentally, being Catholic) which it can now Bolshevize; they are happy, too, because already Russia has proved itself able to be a very strong rival to Nazi Germany and looks as though it would be able to retain Hitler's all-but subservience at its own price. Our Communists, then, disregarding altogether the hideous injustice originally done to Poland, and altogether washing out the ghastly suffering of mind and body being endured, and to be endured, by very many millions, proclaimed the eastern half of the war satisfactorily over: so hypnotized are they by their vision of Russia, that Russia's gains outweigh for them everything else. Our Government, just possibly (we merely register a nervous apprehension proper, in those earlier weeks, to very many), wished also to keep on the right side of Russia by condoning the crucifixion of Poland. Our Reds, of course, determined to allow no credit of any kind to the Government, continue to see in it merely "anti-democratic and anti-Soviet" aims, and we at least acknowledge that now (October) a certain revival of pro-Polish sympathy seems to be visible in part of the Press, probably because the more decent element in our population is shocked by what so much as looks like the elimination of what provided us with our noblest and immediately intelligible challenge. Our unphilosophical nation is much more moved by injustice, let alone cruelty, than by "ideological" disputes even if they incarnate themselves in a Hitler.

All the more shocked are such men of good will as hear of them, by the kind of argument and even rhetoric all too often used in the U.S.A., and actually by Catholics, on behalf of neutrality. Not that we rebuke the desire of remaining outside the war, as such. Who does not hate that ever he had to be in it? But to insist on motives of mere "interest" as accountable for it or for its continuance, or indeed for remaining out of it, not only is to use exactly the same sort of arguments as those used by our Communists, to discourage all those who *are* taking the utterly disinterested view, but leads towards exactly that conclusion of the war which our Reds desire. The Catholic here is not only distressed by the disgrace thus brought upon the Catholic name, but horrified to

see how (unconsciously, of course) such rhetoric and such arguments play straight into the Communists' hands. We pray not only that a curb be placed upon tongues, but that scales may fall from eyes so strangely blinded.

We derived encouragement during these early weeks from, precisely, the moral and even exalted view taken of the world-situation (for no one supposes it to be merely a European one: never have two whole views of life been so clearly set over against one another) by men in all classes of our population.

On re-reading the above, we have come to the conclusion that it may represent rather too elderly a view. It is the view of someone who feels tired, partly because after all, the last War was twenty-five years ago: it was then a new experience, and there was scope for plenty of hard and very happy work. But since we have had quite enough time to see that war did no good of any sort—at least, no good that could not have been done without it—we are so horror-struck by the idea of another war that we feel no zest for such work even if it could be as happy and, we believe, spiritual as last time. We were depressed badly by the consequences (bound to be disastrous) of the Versailles treaties: we had watched everything that was dignified, whether in princely or in peasant life, submerged by the flood of vulgarity which rose steadily higher, though we had never expected that any European personage could deliver himself of vulgarity such as Herr Hitler's has been. Still less did we expect that brutality such as he and his party have displayed could be again possible this side of Russia, even though we have always believed that the blood-lust is very easily to be aroused even in "civilized" man, and especially in the cultured de-Christianized pagan.

Hence we were thrown back upon Faith, and were helped by seeing not a little that could corroborate it, in the person, that is, of a great number of young Catholic men and women. But we badly need a St. Bernard, a Gregory the Great, if not a Hildebrand. Even fictitious democracies do not tend to produce great men; nor does Totalitarianism, any more than Sparta did. But, whatever happens, I think we shall have to be prepared for—be daring enough for—very drastic changes in our apostolic method, and we can but pray that we shall not shirk them, but make the right ones, and find the men to put them into practice.

C. C. MARTINDALE.

ST. THOMAS MORE AND THE SOULS IN PURGATORY

THE spiritual writings of the English mystics of the Middle Ages, of Juliana of Norwich, Richard Rolle and Walter Hilton, have a reputation that they rightly deserve, and works such as the "Scala Perfectionis" have had several modern reprints. The ascetical works of St. Thomas More, though more recent, have been less fortunate, and have shared that obscurity which, as Professor Chambers has pointed out, was for long the fortune of all his writings. It is true that the "Dialogue Against Tribulation" has been re-edited in comparatively recent times, and that his treatise on the "Four Last Things" is contained in the first volume of Mr. W. E. Campbell's sumptuous edition; but much still remains obscured in the black letter of Rastell, printed nearly four hundred years ago. Among these works is one, especially appropriate to the present month, namely, "The Supplication of Souls."

Primarily "The Supplication of Souls" is neither ascetical nor devotional, but controversial. Hence it is not surprising that it should have attracted so little attention. Those who wish to learn something about More's controversy will have recourse to the more famous "Dialogue Against Tyndale"; those who are more interested in his devotional writings will turn to his treatise on the "Four Last Things," or to that on the Passion. And, indeed, it must be confessed that he who reads the book searching for devotion will have to search far, for it is a work of controversy, into which devotion comes only incidentally. Nevertheless, devotional it is in parts, in a way that is simple, direct and eloquent.

The occasion of the book was the publication about the year 1528 by a lawyer named Simon Fish, of an attack on the clergy. He called his book "A Supplication of Beggars," and professed to speak in the name of the "beggars, so greatly increasing in numbers throughout the realm." The increase in their number and their growing destitution, Fish had argued, was due to the clergy. It was the clergy who absorbed all the wealth of England; a third of the soil was in their possession. The friars between them had an income of

£43,333 6s. 8d. a year. Their power was so great that they were a danger to the commonwealth, and might well deprive the king of his crown. The rather inconsequential remedy suggested by Fish was that he should be given leave to "rail against" the clergy, and to urge people to confiscate all their property, force them to do manual work and then to marry.

The whole of the first book of More's "Supplication of Souls" is taken up with answering this tirade. But More does not write in his own name. He speaks to his readers as "your late acquaintance, kindred, spouses and companions, play-fellows and friends, and now your humble and unacquainted and half-forgotten suppliants, poor prisoners of God, ye silly souls in Purgatory." Fish had professed to write out of pity for those on earth who begged for alms; More replied in the name of those in Purgatory who begged for prayers. In brief, the argument is that by robbing the clergy of their property, Fish is robbing them of the means left to them so that they might be able to pray for the Holy Souls. This would be the greatest cruelty to the Holy Souls, and would, moreover, be disastrously short-sighted. For the very despoilers might one day be in Purgatory themselves. Further, the poor, the sick and the maimed are not the only beggars. For who could be more piteous or more helpless beggars than the Holy Souls? "Of all whom [*i.e.*, beggars] there be nowhere in the world neither so needy nor so sore nor so sick nor so impotent and so sore in pains as we."

Besides this general theme, More takes Fish's points, one by one, and demolishes them. He examines the method by which Fish reaches the conclusion that the friars received by begging £43,333 6s. 8d. a year. He finds that it is by assuming that there are no less than 52,000 parish churches in the kingdom. A man might as well, says More, prove that each ass has eight ears by beginning with the assumption that each one has four heads.

Parts of this first book must, perhaps inevitably, be dull to one who reads them to-day. The mysterious death of Richard Hunne may have set London by the ears in 1514, but to the world of 400 years later it is important only as showing contemporary feeling about the clergy. However, in other portions More's irony and wit have a larger scope, for instance, when he is dealing with Fish's proposal to force priests to marry, a proposal "so merry and so mad that it were able to make one laugh that lieth in the fire."

In the second book More deals less with Fish and with his work, and begins to discuss Purgatory itself. He first sets out to prove the existence of Purgatory. Indeed, with this proved, Fish's whole case collapses, for he himself says that if there were any Purgatory, "it were well to give them [the clergy] yet more, and they have then a great deal too little." Even pagans and Saracens, More says, believed that men suffered for a time after they were dead. Such unanimity may be the result of a primitive revelation, or it may be due to the very reasonableness of such a belief. More then passes on to scriptural proofs. To these he devotes a very large part of the work, and with the best of reasons. He was writing against adversaries who were exalting the Bible against the authority of the Church. Accordingly, he was anxious to show that, even if the Bible alone were accepted, an overwhelming argument could be built up in favour of Purgatory. He cites the ordinary texts, the words of the second book of Machabees, "it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from sins"; St. Paul's declaration to the Corinthians, that a man will be saved, "yet so as by fire"; and Christ's saying that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit would be forgiven neither in this world nor in the world to come. But this does not exhaust More's ingenuity. He makes his way through the New Testament and the Old, pointing out wherever the sacred writer seems to imply belief in Purgatory. It was because of his fear of Purgatory, he asserts, that King Ezechias wept when it was announced to him that he was going to die. When it is said in the second chapter of the first book of Kings that the Lord bringeth down to Hell and bringeth back again, the writer means that he places souls in Purgatory and then delivers them. God does not bring souls back again from Hell! Zacharias ix, 11, he interprets in the same way, and then he passes on to the New Testament, citing the Acts, the first Epistle of St. John and the Apocalypse.

Such citations and applications of texts allow little scope for the author's personality to show itself, and it is not until he has shown to his satisfaction how clearly the Bible proves the existence of Purgatory that the work becomes characteristic of the real More. In these last pages the apologetic and controversial tone becomes less marked, and indeed is almost lost behind the appeal for prayer and for sacrifices for the Holy Souls. The appeal reveals More and the mind of More;

it also reveals something of the England of his time, for More had a lawyer's skill in choosing his words, and marshalling them in a way to appeal to, and convince, his fellow-countrymen. The style is rhetorical and could have been addressed only to men for whom the supernatural was very real, men conscious of how closely the next world was knit together with the world around them.

The Holy Souls lament first of all how many forget them, "not of evil mind . . . or of unfaithfulness, but of negligence." But if men could only see their sufferings, sufferings not only of strangers, but of their nearest and dearest, how eager they would be to help them! "We find, therefore," they add, "full true ye old said saw, out of sight out of mind." However, they own that they cannot complain very much, for when they were on earth, they forgot others, as others are now forgetting them. Yet, even though they admit this, the knowledge that they have been so forgotten makes them very sad. Their grief is particularly severe when they first come to Purgatory and see their friends who died before them; they then realize that, when they had it in their power, they did nothing to help them. "Therefore, dear friends, let our folly learn you wisdom. Send hither your prayer, send hither your alms before you; so shall we find ease thereof, and yet, shall ye find it still."

They then proceed to lament that instead of sending their alms before them, men usually spend them on superfluities, or in mere display. "Much have many of us bestowed upon rich men in gold rings, and black gowns, much in many tapers and torches, much in worldly pomp and high solemn ceremonies about our funerals." These pains which they took to ensure an elaborate show at their funerals cause them particular grief. For, instead of making provision for their souls, they were busy ensuring that there should be heralds and an eloquent panegyric, and much feasting, so that people became like madmen "taking our burial for a bridal."

The thought of their money brings them also intense remorse. One of the means which the devils use to torment them is to show them their "substance and bags stuffed with gold." They show them, too, their executors, "as busy rifling and ransacking our houses as though they were men of war that had taken a town by force."

The Holy Souls are also made to learn how even their nearest relations are now devoted to others. Wives are mak-

ing merry with new wooers, children "pipe, sing and dance and no more think on their fathers' souls than on their old shoon." And then there comes a sparkling reflection of More's years of badinage with Mistress Alice. For, indeed, he says, sometimes our wives speak warmly of us. For one of them, "in chiding with her second husband, to spite him withall, 'God have mercy,' saith she, 'on my first husband's soul, for he was . . . an honest man, far unlike you.' And then marvel we much when we hear them say so well by us. For they were ever wont to tell us far otherwise."

Nevertheless, they suffer bitterly from being so forgotten, and thus More returns to his previous theme, "Send hither your prayers, send hither your alms before you." Do not put everything off till death, and rest content with leaving us something in your will. "Our wives there remember here your husbands, our children there remember here your parents, our parents there remember here your children, our husbands there remember here your wives." Finally More writes the most tender and touching passage in the book :

If ye pity the poor, there is none so poor as we, that have not a bratte [*i.e.*, a cloak] to put on our backs. If ye pity the blind, there is none so blind as we, which are here in the dark, saving for sights unpleasant and loathsome, till some comfort come. If ye pity the lame, there is none so lame as we, that neither can creep one foot out of the fire, nor have one hand at liberty to defend our face from the flame. Finally, if ye pity any man in pain, never knew ye pain comparable to ours, whose fire as far passeth in heat all the fires that ever burned upon earth, as the hottest of all those passed a feigned fire, painted upon a wall. If ever ye lay sick and thought the night long, and longed for day, while every hour seemed longer than five, bethink you then what a long night we silly souls endure, that lie sleepless, restless, burning and broiling in the dark fire one long night of many days, of many weeks, and some, of many weeks together. You walter peradventure and tolter [*i.e.*, toss and turn] in sickness from side to side, and find little rest in any part of the bed; we lie bound to the brands, and cannot lift up our heads. You have your physicians with you, that sometimes cure and heal you; no physic will cure our pain, nor no plaster cure our heat.

It is in this manner that a canonized English saint has written about Purgatory. It is natural to compare it with another and more famous work, the treatise on Purgatory by St. Catherine of Genoa. The comparison is not, however, entirely fair. St. Catherine was granted a vision of Purgatory. St. Thomas More, as far as we know, was not. St. Catherine was describing what had been revealed to her about Purgatory. St. Thomas was trying to persuade others to pray for the souls of those who were suffering there. Hence he writes in a way that will appeal to his fellow-citizens. He does not mention the pain of loss which St. Catherine so much stresses, and which he himself must have realized was the greatest sorrow which the Holy Souls have to endure. To write in that way would not have been to appeal to the workaday world of lawyers, craftsmen and business men of various kinds, whom he had in mind.

Nevertheless, the simplicity, the tenderness and the humour with which he writes has an eloquence which penetrates the archaic print and spelling of Rastell's edition, and the mist of forgotten controversies. It reveals to us much of the mind of More and of the England for which he wrote, and vividly brings home to us the sufferings of those Holy Souls who were so dear to his heart.

W. F. REA.

"THE MONTH" FORWARDING SCHEME

We make this earnest appeal to all Forwarders. Please do not forget the mission posts to which you have been sending your copies of *THE MONTH*. The service you render them will be more appreciated now than ever. War conditions will mean that they will feel themselves more isolated than before. Do not deprive them of the comfort—to which so many have given testimony—of receiving *THE MONTH* and thus remaining in contact with English Catholics and with Catholic thought.

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WAR AIMS

AN old lady went to her bank and asked : "Can I cash a cheque?" The cashier answered : "Certainly, madam; how much would you like?" She said : "How much have you got?" We are rather like that in our war aims. Before these lines are published one may be proved wrong. One's commonest experience is to be proved wrong. But certainly, up to the time when these lines were written (October 9, 1939) we had been given nothing more precise than Mr. Chamberlain's formula of September 20th, when he explained our object thus : "to redeem Europe from the perpetual and recurring fear of German aggression and to enable the peoples of Europe to preserve their independence and liberties." That is a little vague : as vague, as global, as tentative, as divorced from reality as the old lady's strategy aforesaid. One knows the case against giving away secrets to the enemy ; one knows that some people include in that category the secret of what we propose to do with him when we beat him.

There is another case. If our object be to defeat Herr Hitler, as distinct from the German people, would it not be wise to commit ourselves now—and to stick to it—about our exact objects? An anonymous German Catholic, writing in *The Tablet* of October 7th, declared : "Everything should be done to convince them [the German people] that another or worse Versailles is not thought of, for that is the great obsession of the German masses which the regime does its utmost to keep alive." It is indeed arguable that he whose cause is just—or better than the enemy's—has more need of honest propaganda than of guns. In the present case, on the hypothesis of every single thing that has been said on the Allied side, the enemy is Herr Hitler's Government, and the protégés the peoples of Europe, including the German people. Why, then, do we hesitate to state exactly what we propose to the German people? Why, in short, do we not break the only hold of Herr Hitler over his deluded subjects, the fear, namely, that our true object is to cripple the German people?

It may be, however, that while this is printing, the door here forced will be opened. We do advance. When we last

fought this war, a quarter of a century ago, it took years, not weeks, for people even to begin agitating about war aims. In 1917 the British Government was asked in the House of Commons what were our war aims. Lord Robert Cecil, as he then was, on behalf of the Government refused to answer. After three years of war the Government either did not know and did not want to decide, or refused to disclose what it was fighting for, what its men were dying for. It is impossible to forget the horror one felt, at a younger and a greener age, over what seemed to be the inexplicable levity of a Government that sent millions to their death without even telling them why. "Theirs not to reason why"?

'Εν δὲ φάει καὶ ὀλεσσον, cried Ajax: "Slay me, if thou must; let it but be in the light." To one who has studied diplomacy at first hand for a quarter of a century, the difficulty about making a commitment is well known. "The least said, soonest mended" is the commonest slogan of high diplomacy. In the present case the most reasonable argument against the formulation of war aims may be summarized in this way: "How can we at this moment commit ourselves to the liberation of Czechoslovakia as well as of Poland from the German yoke? By Czechoslovakia do we mean the pre-Munich or the post-Munich Czechoslovakia? If the former, what about the Munich settlement we signed? Can we argue that as Hitler broke his word, we can break ours? In the case of Poland do we demand the evacuation of eastern Poland by Russia as well as of western Poland by Germany? If so, are we at war with Russia?" And so on, *ad infinitum*.

Those who like talking about *perfidie Albion* make the cynical comment that although in the spring of 1939 we abandoned a traditional policy by giving a clear commitment to Poland in advance of an hypothetical contingency, yet the tradition died hard, and we left at any rate one good door open. The exact wording of the famous pledge of March 31st ran thus: "In the event of any action which clearly threatened Polish independence and which the Polish Government accordingly considered it vital to resist with their national forces, His Majesty's Government would feel themselves bound at once to lend the Polish Government all support in their power."

Be it observed, we are committed to vindicate Polish independence, not Polish integrity. The traditionalists say: "There you are. How wise it was to be cautious! Who

could have foretold at the end of March, 1939, that the aggression would be Russian as well as German? We now, you see, are able to free the German half and ignore the Russian half, in complete loyalty to our pledge."

Such quibbling gets us nowhere. The present fact is that we are at war, or at least that we have declared war. The present reality is summed up (unless Stalin completely shifts the centre of gravity) in the one name Adolf Hitler. It is an interesting and a puzzling thing. Adolf Hitler is a name known to-day to every man and woman in every continent of the globe. His is the initiative, his the tune to which we all dance. The whole normal business of the world is suspended, the while we deal with this man. Lives have been lost in battle, hearts broken, culture devastated: because of him. What kind of man is this who has such power? He is, to put it in one word, the Complete Cad; a man who feels his opportunist way from one act of banditry to another, lying as he goes, to silence suspicion (though that particular tactic works only once), vituperating his victims after conquest, never showing one spark of generosity, pity or decent feeling whatsoever, totally lacking in scruple. That, and more. How comes it that such a man is able to hold the field? How is it that even luck seems to conspire for him; that the weather itself served his purpose in Poland?

The answer is, of course, that Hitler is the symptom, not the disease. Bad men, like boils, come to a head and hurt the whole body, whether physical or politic. It is no good cursing the boil. The fault lies in what preceded it. And that brings us to the old, old question. Is this war merely like all the others, past and still to come? On this point at any rate we of this generation are qualified to speak. It has seldom fallen to man to pass through a major war (as he did from 1914 to 1918) and then, before he dies, to pass through substantially the same war again, fought for the same purpose, by the same principals. *Delenda est Carthago*? Frederick the Great, the Kaiser, Herr Hitler: are they a still unended sequence? Even so, can we "allow" Nazi aggression to multiply unchecked? When (it is argued) we are presented with the spectacle of the Cad trying to strangle the child, we first strangle the Cad and talk philosophy later. "War aims" can be thought out when *la victoire intégrale* is assured. Moreover (though he mobilize God in his speeches) Hitler, out of his own mouth, is proved to be anti-

Christian, if not—some might even say—Antichrist himself; and his ally is atheist Stalin. So this is a religious war, too?

What is obviously true is that before war aims can be defined, the character of the war itself must be defined. Five weeks after the declaration of war, the real war had not started. Russia, technically a neutral, was even more oppressively in occupation of one-half of Poland than was Germany, technically the enemy, of the other half. The diplomats of half a dozen neutral States were running round in circles, with Moscow at the centre. Before the major war started, the two great neutrals, Italy and the United States, were canvassing the possibility of an "armistice." Hitler had started what was clearly intended to be a "peace offensive."

Could it be, asked some people, that God in His pity, had used atheist Communism to the good end that Christian Europe should not destroy itself by war? And was it, therefore, a good argument, by those who opposed the announcement of definitive war aims, to plead that if only we gained time, the common Russian menace from the East might unite the Christian West, and ensure the overthrow, without war in the West, of the traitor Hitler who had opened the gate to atheist Communism? If Hitler, who had always used Russian Bolshevism as the bogey wherewith to frighten the German people into supporting him, should now by his supreme treachery of whitewashing "Herr Sthalin," encompass his own undoing at the very hands of Stalin, would not the justice be both poetic and providential, in that it might, after all, rid Europe of Hitler without a war between Christians? In my book "Peace with Gangsters?" (reviewed in *THE MONTH* of last June) the possibility was hazarded that this war, after all, might be averted by the very ramifications of the diplomatic muddle, and that the issues might settle themselves by political, not by military, forces. Was the author wrong again? Five weeks after the declaration of war, however, it could be said that even a declaration of war had failed to produce a war. In its turn that question may be answered, before these lines appear.

What, then, of war aims? Even supposing that incalculable factors may still be multiplied, and that the Hitler-Stalin compact may yet prove a blessing in disguise by ensnaring godless works into their own destruction, is there not still a chance of helping on the good cause by an open and reassuring statement to the German people?

Why should not the British and French Governments nail their colours to the mast by some such statement as this : "(1) Our quarrel is not with the German people; (2) We cannot discuss a treaty of peace with the present rulers of Germany for the simple reason that those rulers have so often proved that their signature is worthless; (3) We acknowledge our own faults, in particular our failure to respond wisely to Weimar Germany; (4) We promise to repair that mistake; (5) Though we cannot recognize any German title to non-German territory conquered by Herr Hitler, we promise to the German people, if they produce a plenipotentiary whose word can be trusted, to review the whole muddle of Versailles Europe, to the particular end that Germany's share of the world's raw materials and amenities be ensured to her" ?

Such a programme is itself vague in the sense that it makes no specific offer. But it fulfils the essential purpose of offering the German people an alternative to Hitlerist methods, which they, in common with all decent people, must abhor; and it satisfies the chief postulate of Mr. Chamberlain's statement of September 20th. On the lower ground it would constitute better and more effective propaganda than that so far dropped from the skies by the R.A.F. or propelled through the skies by the B.B.C.

To look further ahead, beyond the confines of this particular war, we still have to make a settlement with "Cæsar." In one sense the modern habit of war, started in 1914, has still to be dealt with. No war can end war, nor make the world fit for heroes to live in, nor fit for democracy, nor Christian. Milton was right when he asked : "For what can war but endless war still breed?" The proof? We have it in our own experience. At the very moment when the Treaty of Versailles was being signed to replace war with what was called in that treaty "a firm, just and durable Peace," Allied forces were fighting in Russia on one side in a civil war against the other. Italy, in 1919, annexed Fiume by war. In 1923 Italy sent a fleet to occupy Corfu. The Poles were at war with the Ukrainians in 1919, and as a result, with the Russians in 1920. In 1920, also, Polish troops annexed Vilna, then the capital of Lithuania. Greece was at war with Turkey in 1921. French troops marched into Germany in January, 1923. Such was the immediate sequel of the "firm, just and durable Peace." Nor was it merely the secondary flicker of a dying conflagration. The crescendo was unin-

errupted. Japan's annexation of Manchukuo and her war on the whole of China, Italy's annexation of Abyssinia and of Albania, the Communist war in Spain, Germany's several aggressions, were the precursor of the grand climax in which we have now started—unless we are rescued from the very edge in the way suggested above—the same old original war all over again.

It cannot too often be reiterated that the present revolutionary wars are the direct result, or the continuing manifestation, of what we did between 1914 and 1918. We render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. But Cæsar has gone too far. At the present moment the whole of Europe, most of Asia and America are subject to the political dictate of what we call civilization. The antithesis between God and Cæsar has become too marked. It was in the last Great War of 1914—1918 that for the first time in history the Governments of the warring Powers—and they included every Great Power in the world—were invested with full dictatorship over the lives, property and personal freedom of their peoples. Can it really surprise anyone who takes a comprehensive view of the past half-century that the practice of political dictatorship established between 1914 and 1918 was destined to be perpetuated in its various forms—Bolshevism in Russia, Fascism in Italy, Nazi-ism in Germany, and in Britain a nameless system which, despite its democratic label, gave to the Government a dominance, economic and financial as well as political, never before dreamt of in English history?

In its origin, political civilization derived from a communal impulse of self-defence: the defence of life and property against lawless aggression and the preservation of individual freedom. In its ultimate practice it has become, not the safeguard, but the chief menace to life, property, freedom and religion alike.

A certain Prussian officer, Lieut.-General Baron von Freitag-Loringhoven, during the last Great War, wrote a book which he called "Deductions from the World War." It was published in 1917, when the author was Deputy Chief of the German General Staff. In it he expressed the professional soldier's resentment of the new development whereby war had become the affair of nations in the mass, civilians, women and children included. "We must not," he wrote, "let the bright side of universal service blind us to its dark side. Henceforth the passion of war infected whole nations, and

this passion was constantly inflamed anew by contact with that of the enemy. Therewith many of those barriers were overthrown by means of which the professional soldier, preserving the chivalrous customs of the Middle Ages, had sought to check the excesses of war. Also the barriers which international law had sought to oppose to the encroachments of war collapsed in the face of this new violence."

It must be admitted that the savage practices of the Middle Ages never visited upon mankind so widespread or so methodical a horror as that of modern war.

When an American Senator lately declared that to compare the practices of Hitlerist Germany with the practices of the Middle Ages was to insult the Middle Ages, he was making a fair score in two senses. He might have gone further and extended his sweeping condemnation to the whole modern practice of what we call civilization. For consider just one broad fact. After one Great War the victorious Great Powers sought to prevent any future German expansion in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe by establishing a belt of small independent countries to block the way: Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland (with a corridor to the sea through Danzig and Gdynia whereby East Prussia was cut off from the Reich), Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia. These puppet States (puppet in the intention of their creators) have gone down like ninepins, as any child could have told the pundits of Versailles: for small States always were and always will be, until civilization be regenerated, the pawns of Great Power intrigue. A strong Germany and a strong Russia, in so far as it may suit their purpose, ignore what they regard as artificial national boundaries. And Britain, one of the authors of the Versailles trick, finds herself not only committed to war with Germany on behalf of a now non-existent Poland, but faced, moreover, with the unexpected complication that the last and greatest aggressor is not Germany at all but Russia.

The only sound deduction recorded in the Prussian soldier's book aforesaid was written in the last page of the book, thus: "We find it impossible to believe in the realization of genuine pacifist ideals, such as are cherished by well-meaning sentimentalists. Only a spiritual transformation of the human race could bring this about, and how far we are from any such transformation has been revealed by the war."

It is still being revealed. It is arguable that the greatest

present cause for man's heroism and resource is the reform of his own civilization. We have free will, and we have used it badly. The first step to wisdom is confession of fault. Pope Pius XI, in 1932, foresaw the new catastrophe into which mankind was drifting, and which was then foreshadowed by the spectacle of the insincere disarmament conference, destined to be followed by the secession of Germany from the League of Nations and her *volte-face* from correctitude and patience into Hitlerism. The Encyclical he then issued, "Caritate Christi," summoned the nations to prayer, penance and mortification. His Holiness diagnosed the real causes which lay at the root of the international disorder thus: the concentration of national wealth into the hands of a too small group of a nation's citizens; an exaggerated nationalism in the motive of government; an unequal international distribution of wealth; and the revolt of man against God. He summarized the root cause in the famous words of St. Paul: "The love of money is the root of all evils."

On the one hand, it is true that Hitler is a despicable gangster. On the other hand, we are not so saintly, either. When Christian Europe proceeds twice within one generation to plunge into an orgy of mutual destruction God, in His infinite resource, sends from the East a true and unmistakable Antichrist to make us pause. We are given another chance, at the eleventh hour, to stop a war which can benefit only the forces of Antichrist. Let us take heed, before it is too late.

GEORGE GLASGOW.

EDITORIAL NOTE

All contributions submitted to the Editor must be typed and be accompanied by a sufficiently large stamped addressed envelope—stamps (or Post Office coupons from abroad) alone will not suffice. Articles so submitted should be concerned with matters of general interest, and be the fruit of expert knowledge or original research. They should not ordinarily exceed 3,500 words, and must be intended for exclusive publication in the "Month," if accepted. As a general rule, subjects dealing with the exposition of theology and ethics are reserved to the staff.

VITALITY AND THE ASCETIC

MR. J. B. PRIESTLEY, who really is in these days doing some genuine hard thinking—not permitting popularity or production to filch his private meditation—in his latest autobiographical volume, “Rain Upon Godshill,” has (among many other good-natured sallies) a fling against asceticism as that is understood and practised by the inexpert or by the well-meaning and imperfectly instructed. Like most widely-read authors, he is bombarded with letters, pamphlets and queer programmes from devotees of odd cults and systems; and in these days—of self-expression, not to say self-assertion minus inhibition—it is surprising to hear that a proportion of these exalt, so as to distort, the duty of “going without.” One would hardly have thought it; but it has stimulated the vital Mr. Priestley to the following observations :

They concentrate on the Good at the expense of the True and the Beautiful. They are too exclusively ethical. Their spokesmen are not unlike those professors of philosophy who prove that the whole universe must have been designed to produce professors of philosophy. There is nothing in their theory to prove that any unselfish but sapless clerk or pious governess is not worth a dozen Shakespeares or Beethovens. No allowance is made for size and richness of mind and soul.

This, I believe, is an approximate picture of certain of those old-time meeting-houses (see George Eliot’s “Lantern Yard” and Mark Rutherford’s “Cowfold”), wistful little temples of a now vanished cult; and it may partly describe a few etiolated new “movements.” But not, I think, classic, central, Catholic Christianity, which reminded Arnold of “the pell-mell of Shakespeare’s plays.” Indeed, Mr. Priestley says he has been snowed under with pamphlets, Christian, Buddhist, Theosophical, New and Higher Thought, in which mere rejection or a negative attitude is assumed to be the beginning of a spiritual life. They ask us to lead the existence of a ghost—rather than to live ardently like a poet (one thinks of poets like Patmore, Thompson, Lionel Johnson, and

Noyes); and he asks what place there is "for those battle-scarred giants of our race who have swung between passionate rebellion against the gods and agonies of pity and tenderness for their kind. Even Aldous Huxley, in his 'Ends and Means,' seems to me altogether too negative."

Spirit [he says] is associated not with the inmost flame of life, whose absence is real death, but with a tepid indifference or fierce opposition to the flesh, which is given a supreme reality of its own.

This he attributes to ancient Eastern influence; good men being "compelled to retreat from the glare and confusion and sensual riot of common life, in order to meditate at all." Well, he admits there is place for retreat still, for men with *minds*; he has just done *his* in the Arizona desert, and in a quiet spot in the Isle of Wight—and fruitfully. That "glare and confusion" marks the world to-day as it did 1,900 years ago.

There is truth and sanity in his claim that "there are more kinds of excellence in the spirit than some appear to understand. It is a house of many mansions, and not every room is occupied by an ascetic examiner." This recalls Francis Thompson's famous plea for Shelley; G.K.C.'s zest for common life, and Dickens, Browning, Stevenson, Christmas carols, fairies, good cheer, and detective yarns; many a sappy page of Belloc; the dozen living Catholic joke-makers; and not every priest or monk (be it said with caution) is a walking shadow!

We know what Mr. Priestley means, and we agree. He would see the intense vitality in the "asceticism" of Dante, Ignatius, Francis, and our own St. Thomas More; but not in the *coterie* mysticism of some Watts and Burne-Jones pictures, or even a *few* Catholics who don't live out the full Faith. I find the saints *better mixers* than stoic or transcendental philosophers, whether Thoreau, Santayana or Aldous Huxley. As a writer, and on the human side, Priestley himself is more "Catholic" than, say, Henry James or Meredith. The vulgar current talk about "success" and a good time make *him* feel ascetic, in reaction, quite rightly: we sympathize with his vivid pages on that topic.

The fact is, no man is good for anything who has not *both* poles in his nature—the vigour, and the rein to guide and curb it; the fluency—and the censorship; appetite—and con-

tinence. If he appreciates the implications of his Faith, the Catholic, who is in the way of knowing as much about asceticism as anyone (West or East), is just the man to relish all the other rich elements in life, natural and spiritual. The art of life, that of nature and that of grace, is the knowledge of How to Be, to Suffer, to Do, and to Do Without—all in the right proportion, and for the right motives. The fellow who is keen on "becoming" and on little else becomes a go-getter, an egoist; and a bounder perhaps. He who thinks only of "doing" is apt to take too many crops from a thin soil and to finish merely as "a big noise." Those who put "being" first and last, discover that it is not to be had but by doing and undergoing things.

The world does not censure the asceticism of the Boat Race crews, athletes, jockeys, and Russian dancers! *That* is "news." Still, Mr. Priestley is largely right: many a free-lance in the ethical and religious worlds is working with half a technique and with an inadequate chart. Like the Gallios in the world who care for none of these things, they are at the very human game of confusing means and ends. What we call self-discipline, mortification, asceticism, fasting or abstinence are mental, volitional and spiritual *training*, of which the further ends are communion, knowledge of spiritual things and, in its time, the Beatific Vision. Such exercises imposed on oneself without full understanding of their vital purposes and ends are better than no taking of oneself in hand at all. Nevertheless, their value is the greater for being understood. The good mechanic scrapes, cleans and polishes his car or engine; but his interest does not terminate here; the object of all this cleanly violence is good running. The whole point of cleaning windows is to receive a more true and exhilarating view through them. Sensible if strict diet, plus odd-looking "jerks" and quainter-looking breathing-exercises, are not goals, except to those who get little good from them; they are instrumental to the vigorous life on the natural plane. Art itself, even Mr. Priestley's healthy, spontaneous art, has, as its secret, limitation, selection; that is, throwing something away, even good things, if they are not germane to the better purpose in hand. The artist in drama, poetry or novel, like the artist in the spiritual life working in the vivid school of the Holy Spirit ("the Lord, the Life-Giver"), does not reject things only as being "evil," but rejects scores of things, all the time and instinctively—and easily—because they are not

in the flow of his design, although these things in themselves have their place and their minor worth.

Of course, one has not seen the weird contents of Mr. Priestley's post-bags: but it can certainly be believed that his correspondents comprise many one-sided, single-track minds. There are mentalities which on "principle" cannot tolerate the idea that Matter exists; others are as angrily excited by Spirit—the term or the reality; some swear by beer, others at it; a few fondly suppose that they are creatures solely of Reason, more that they are automata activated by instinct, the subconscious (and not a nice subconscious), *ids*, *libidos*, *complexes*, *Œdipus* and others. There are mental anarchs—and necessarians; optimists and, worse still, pessimists. Some were born Right; others were merely Left. Among the intellectuals, there are the votaries of Apollo, and those of Dionysus.

Heaven save us from all these maimed versions. Common sense ought to do so. Still more, common sense prompted continually by what Tennyson called "Catholic wholeness." But Catholic wholeness is not the complete possession—yet—of every Catholic. Not all individual minds are as good as the vast Home they inhabit, even as not all appetites are equal to the multifarious flavours, fruits, and condiments of this astonishingly furnished world of ours. Nay—whisper it—one has known Catholics who pick and choose, who pass some dishes at the feast; or place store on three or four at most. Private judgment rears its (unrecognized) head in some people at times, often with effects more absurd than really sinful; the preferences are so irrational, personal and gratuitous. Such followers of "the fancy" will find much that concerns their case in Mr. E. I. Watkin's new book, "The Catholic Centre," of which the theme is that all defective life (and all heresy) is ex-centric, while Catholicism in its rich balanced all-roundness, keeps all truths in their graded place, fruitfully crossed with each other, cross-fertilized, mutually elucidated, mutually corrected, mutually proportioned.

Yes: we hear that, and many of us thereupon hastily conclude that we, individually, are or possess the "one entire and perfect chrysolite" as glorious John Dryden called his Faith. And we don't; not all of us. Catholicism, as practised in many a particular time and place, by you or me, falls short of its full nature; through our fault. It asks, to begin with,

more brain and consistent *attention* than many will give it; though even if it were only a philosophy, and not a Life and a Salvation, it would be worth (say) three times the intellectual absorption we accord to it. Many of us would be immensely happier and more complete if we made it our habitual fireside study and hobby, as well as our public function and "duty." A religious genius or a specially called saint *may* (I cannot say) keep a flourishing Faith without *reading*, for instance. I have never met such a paragon. All I know is that *mine* (in this, I think, typical of most men's) would grow hungry, a trifle blurred in outline, and clamorous for the traffic of ideas, if I starved myself of doctrinal or devotional reading, say for three or six months. The hungry sheep in our world look round and are not fed—and hence the noise of ineffectual bleating everywhere. Why won't they consume more simple, good printed matter? Why not read up the subject of their present-and-eternal-welfare as they do trivial topics? Why not leave, once in a while, the everlasting wash of fiction for instance, and, like Byron after a surfeit of fable and politics, cry out: "Give me something craggy to break my mind on"?

We would find that trifles teased us less: the occasional indifferent, popular art in a few churches would sink almost out of notice; we would not be put off by a few sugary tunes, or words like "sweet" in several hymns about which Chesterton wrote with such refreshing vigour: because the correctives and the correct versions would be supplied from within. We would be proof against cavils that our crucifixes, etc., keep the suffering of our Lord more to the front than the triumph; for we should remember the Liturgy's fifty days of Paschal alleluias after a fortnight of Passiontide. Our prayers, the ancient as well as the newer, ask for health of body and mind, and imply that good health is promoted by true religion—sufficient answer to any demur that we see the world as "a vale of tears" only (though it is assuredly that, among other things). I talked with Epstein the sculptor in his studio about his sculpture of Christ when it was just finished. I told him it was not *my* idea of the appearance in the flesh of the Son of Man. He asked whether mine was that of the average stained-glass window; to which I sincerely said, No. But he rightly named the great need that He who was "the Life of men" should be portrayed, if at all, as virile and magisterial, without prejudice to the profound mercy and susceptibility which give the Figure of the Gospels its unfading

appeal, the mystery and colour-elements of life. (May I interpose, and say how moved I was when newly a Catholic I first joined in the thrilling Litanies—of the Holy Name, and of the Sacred Heart? The grand titles mount with cumulative effect to a climax; so that the Glory of Christ is felt as nowhere else but in parts of the Mass.) Together with "take up your cross," we are told "I am come that you might have Life, and have it more abundantly." While we were prepared for wars, evils and betrayals, we were also told "Lift up your heads, for then your redemption draweth nigh." For every shadow, Christianity has a beam of light. Death itself, to it, is subordinate to life. Its characteristic terms are: life, light, regeneration, born again, leaven, spirit, joy, power, resurrection, transformation, renewal, and many more of the same dynamic and seminal order. The Transfiguration on the mount stands, significantly, at the centre of our Redeemer's earthly life. The Joyful Mysteries and the Glorious, in the Rosary, are ten; the Sorrowful, with which they are bound up, are five. The sequels of Calvary were the Resurrection, and the Ascension, and the coming-again in Pentecost.

So it is radiantly clear that in Christianity "spirit is associated with the inmost flame of life," in Mr. Priestley's words. The positive *does* dominate the negative. It is better understood as acceptance than as its incidental rejections. Nevertheless, the Son of Man who "came eating and drinking," not shrinking from crowds and sinners, did not only Himself observe the laws of polarity in life and periodically retreat "into a desert place to rest awhile," or "pray on the mountain, at night, alone"; but also did in fact say, If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out; that is, if the pride of life and the lust of the eye imperil prizes infinitely richer, cut them out—it is better to enter Life maimed than miss it because of some more vulgar "life" distraction or corruption. The *wise* ascetic is not a self-tormentor, but a fulfiller: he knows that the enemy of the Best is the solicitous throng of second bests.

As for "telling you to live eagerly and ardently like a poet," that is, *par excellence*, the "note" of the saints—Saints Francis, Bernard, Teresa, John of the Cross, Ignatius, Benedict, and others; and even St. Thomas Aquinas gave an aureole of high poetry to doctrinal hymns. For them, to live with Christ is poetry, poetry made life, the supreme romance, "life that is life indeed." Not only for them, but for millions of anonymous nobodies in the world's eyes; people strange to

all publicity and who could not advertise. Indeed, the *extent* of Christ's influence on the wide world and its history and institutions, manners and codes, though incalculable, is as nothing in comparison with its depth and quality in the sphere of privacy and the unseen heart; "the King's daughter is all glorious *within*."

The debate between so-called life-worshippers and death-worshippers (to use a modern idiom) is rather falsetto. *What sort of life?* That is the question. Let our religion be as rich in content as possible, by all means, embracing beauty, science, music, the arts and graces, philanthropic works, political idealism, love of nature, value of the body, and "whatsoever things are true, lovely, and of good report"—miss *none* out!—*but* at a pinch, if the pinch comes, the seeing man "sells all that he hath" for the Pearl of price. He does that because to do that is good art, good business, wise life, the finest "science," the deepest philosophy. Only by *some* limitation do we attain the Illimitable. Usually we are, most of us, not asked for any drastic surgical operation upon our mental interests (most people could do with far more interests!); what most of us have to cut away is a set of vulgar correspondences with cheap environments. But that isn't *loss*! It is sheer gain, when into the vacant faculty He pours "in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," of whom it is said "ye are *complete* in Him."

What a lot have the ancient Manichees, and the more modern Puritans and Jansenists, to answer for! They did not let love have its full way. In place of "the love of Christ constrains us," they seemed to read "the fear of offending (or the fear of hell) constrains us." The latter may keep *out* many of the worse forms of sin; but only the former lets *in* the Source of joy, the Satisfier of our central faculty. The believer whose religion is (to say it reverently) a personal friendship, a love-affair, a vivid, intimate allegiance, will actually excel the scrupulous ones at their own *forte* of self-denial and sacrifice; for *he* will not feel it as a privation or an imposition. Love, even natural love, suffers—and declines to feel it as suffering: what the one takes as a penalty the other takes as a privilege, or at least as part of the dear relationship.

The last word in this debate, of asceticism and life, as in so many other controversies, is the solving word of love.

W. J. BLYTON.

A SURVEY OF PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

MR. HARRY PRICE, as is well known, is an extremely active promoter of studies connected with man's paranormal faculties. We may readily allow that by following a rather showmanlike policy he has drawn a good deal of public attention to the subject, or at any rate to such personal experiments of his own as the Brocken apparitions, the haunted house at Meopham, the "talking mongoose," the fire walkers brought from India, and so forth. Still, it is apparent even from the book which he has just published¹ that he cannot be accounted an unchallenged leader in this branch of science. He is well acquainted with what is going on, but he does not possess the confidence of the generality of students pursuing the same line of investigation. How this has come about will probably be no great mystery to those who are acquainted with Mr. Price's many previous books and articles, together with the criticisms which they have elicited. There is apt to be an undercurrent of suspicion that he is laying a trap to pull the leg of his readers, or that in his most emphatic affirmations he is more influenced by personal feelings and interests than would appear to be fully justified.

But the fact that Mr. Harry Price has not everywhere found favour as a spokesman of the cause does not disqualify him from furnishing a well-informed report of what has happened in these circles during the past fifty years. He is probably as competent to speak as anyone we could name, as he has the advantage of wide personal contact with the phenomena and their producers, as well as the book knowledge which comes from an extensive study of the literature. He admits, of course, that the main attempt at any sort of organization in this class of investigations is to be traced to the foundation in 1882 of the Society for Psychical Research. He allows that "for 57 years the English S.P.R. has kept the flag flying," though he adds that "at times the perishing winds of criticism and hostility threatened to tear it to ribbons." Mr. Price does

¹ "Fifty Years of Psychical Research." By Harry Price, Honorary Secretary, University of London Council for Psychical Investigation. With Illustrations. London: Longmans. Pp. xii, 384. Price, 10s. 6d.

not exactly identify himself with any formal indictment of the Society, but the question whether it has fulfilled its purpose is, in his eyes, clearly a matter of doubt. Under the heading "The Scandal Persists," he refers to certain words spoken by Professor Henry Sidgwick at the first general meeting of the S.P.R. in 1882, who then declared that it was a scandal to the enlightened age in which we live that a dispute as to the reality of the marvellous phenomena so constantly reported (ghosts, levitations, materializations, telepathy, etc.) should still be going on. "Now the primary aim of our Society," said the President, "the thing which we all unite to promote, whether as believers or non-believers, is to make a sustained and systematic attempt to remove this scandal in one way or another. The matter is far too important to be left where it now is." On this, Mr. Harry Price comments: "These words were spoken fifty-seven years ago and the 'scandal' still exists. The Society has reached no conclusions after all this time and after issuing scores of volumes of publications." But, even so, we may ask: is it *possible* to reach satisfying conclusions? Supposing fifty such organizations had existed, should we now be any nearer the goal aimed at? Despite the endless investigations devoted to the cause and cure of rheumatism—to take a medical illustration—are we any nearer a solution of this physical mystery? Mr. Price gives the impression of not being entirely sympathetic with the S.P.R. as at present conducted, and after giving a list of the Presidents elected to date, he has a rather mischievous thrust at certain University and family influences which have tended to confine the Society's activities to staid and unenterprising lines of exploration.

An analysis of the above list [he remarks] reveals that, during fifty-seven years, only six foreigners were elected to the Presidential chair, that the founder of the Society (Sir William Barrett) occupied it for one year only, and that the Sidgwicks and their relatives occupied it for nineteen years.

Apart from a few references to certain organizations on the Continent and in the U.S.A., Mr. Price, perhaps not unnaturally, does not give any notable prominence to the efforts which have been made outside the S.P.R. to interest the scientific world in mediumistic phenomena. It is a foundation of his own which alone in this country seems to him to

offer some kind of much needed rivalry to the organization which took shape under the presidency of Professor Henry Sidgwick. Only in 1923 was it possible for Mr. Price, as the result of much energetic work and considerable expenditure, to set on foot a "psychic laboratory" which, in the course of a few years and after sundry changes of address, may be said to have reached a level of high efficiency in the matter of equipment. From 1931 to 1937 it was installed at 13 Roland Gardens, South Kensington, and a detailed description of its contents and appliances is given in Appendix B of the volume with which we are here concerned. Mr. Price had for a considerable time been keen to induce one of the more important Universities to accord some form of academic recognition to this branch of research, and at last, in 1934, what had previously been known as the "National Laboratory" became "the University of London Council for Psychical Investigation." Mr. Price, in giving a short account of the steps by which his efforts to obtain recognition eventually met with at least a measure of success, tells us how, in 1933, he made an offer to the University of London "to found, equip, and endow a Department of Psychical Research in the University."¹ He adds that "the proposal was that I should hand over the equipment and library of the National Laboratory of Psychical Research, the directorship of which I was then relinquishing." In return, Mr. Price received from the late Sir Edwin Deller, then Principal of the University of London, what he describes as an "historic letter" of encouragement. It is curious, however, that beyond the words "psychical research is a fit subject of University study and research," no portion of this "historic" document, so far as I can discover, has been reproduced in the volume. On the other hand, further interest in the subject and in its energetic promoter seems to be developing in Germany. We may read, for example :

The outstanding event in psychical research during recent years is the declaration of the German Government that it would be prepared officially to give its blessing to a Department of Parapsychology at Bonn University, if I would found it. When Professor Dr. E. Rothacker, the Director of the Bonn Psychologisches Institut, and his colleague Dr. Hans Bender, heard that I was anxious for academic support for my scheme of introducing

¹ "Fifty Years of Psychical Research," p. 63.

psychical research into the universities, I was invited to Bonn to talk the matter over. In the meantime, the whole question was referred to the German Home Office, Board of Education, the Foreign Office, and Ministry of Propaganda. In March, 1937, I was officially informed by letter that the German Government, having thoroughly examined the whole question, was favourable to the founding of the proposed new Department at Bonn. The letter (dated March 20, 1937) stated that the Government "authorized the establishment of a Department for Abnormal Psychology and Parapsychology (*Forschungsstelle für psychologische Grenzwissenschaften*), and think of special interest to this Department, besides the research work, questions of social hygiene in occult matters." This letter, like the one I have quoted from Sir Edwin Deller, is of great historical interest, as the Third Reich is the first Government officially to place its cachet on psychical research. This is the more striking, as Spiritualism has been suppressed in Germany. The letter I have cited proposed various academic honours for me in the event of my founding the proposed new Department.¹

It seems to me that in this sympathetic response of the German Board of Education to the appeal of Mr. Harry Price and his friends, there is probably more than meets the eye. The Rhineland University of Bonn is retentive of its historic Catholic traditions. The professors and scientists who control the education of the Reich are, no doubt, persuaded that any sort of serious investigation of reputed phenomena is bound to end in the exposure of a great deal of gross superstition. This, consequently, in their view, is a healthy antidote to the beliefs of the average Catholic and a thing to be encouraged, particularly if those who share these interests can be induced to carry on the work at their own expense. Decorations are a convenient form of remuneration and have the merit of involving no expenditure.

Another curious testimony to Mr. Harry Price's fame as a specialist in things occult is mentioned by him in connexion with the visit to England in 1930, at his invitation, of the famous psychometrist Frau Lotte Plaat. She was regularly employed by the German police, we are told, in tracking malefactors, and in 1930 she was in France for the same purpose.

¹ "Fifty Years of Psychical Research," pp. 71-72.

"During her visit to London," says Mr. Price, "someone from Scotland Yard rang me up and asked me whether I should be willing, if invited, to lend Frau Plaat to help them—unofficially, of course—in a case on which they were engaged. I said I would, and next morning spent an hour at the 'Yard' discussing the matter." The case, however, concerned a woman believed to have been murdered in Cheshire. It seems that the Cheshire Chief Constable threw cold water on the scheme, rather, one gathers, to Mr. Price's disappointment.

In view of the terms of the onslaughts directed against Mr. Price from time to time in the *Spiritualist Press*, it would be easy to suppose that he is an out-and-out sceptic with regard to all paranormal phenomena whether physical or mental. I am not sure even that the tone of his previous works has not done a good deal to encourage that impression. But if we may take at their face value the statements made in a chapter of the present book which is entitled "I believe . . .," it would appear that Mr. Price, after all, accepts a great deal which the more critical section of the S.P.R. are unwilling to regard as even matter worthy of discussion. He begins the chapter in question with these words: "Whenever a new book of mine appears, and after every broadcast, I receive many letters asking me exactly what and how much I believe—if, in fact, I believe anything at all—and how I account for those few phenomena I do not damn out of hand." Mr. Price goes on to explain that there are very few phenomena studied by psychical researchers that have been demonstrated scientifically. They cannot be evoked and reproduced at will under the kind of test conditions which would satisfy a committee of scientists of the Royal Society. But, nevertheless, the evidence for such happenings, scattered though it be, is overwhelming. Students who work at ease in their laboratories are too impatient of disturbance to follow it up. For his own part Mr. Price definitely states:

I am convinced that I have witnessed telekinetic phenomena—the displacement of objects such as the levitation and intelligent movements of various toys, musical instruments, waste-paper baskets, small articles of furniture, the billowing, waving, shaking, and bulging of curtains enclosing the séance "cabinet," often violently. I have heard raps, knocks, and other percussive

phenomena, often at command, which were not produced normally. I have seen séance "lights," some percussive and some lambent, mostly of a bluish tint which could not be explained by any laws with which we are at present acquainted.¹

To this list our supposed sceptic goes on to add a number of other classes of phenomena, including notably those racketing disturbances known as "poltergeist" cases, in which showers of stones are thrown, furniture and crockery are hurled about or broken, without the intervention of any perceptible agent and quite commonly in broad daylight. No doubt many of these stories are no better than newspaper stunts without serious evidence to support them, but they cannot all be set aside on this ground. "I am certain," writes Mr. Price, "that houses are affected by influences—evil, beneficent, or mischievous—and I have proved it over and over again. In particular I am convinced that the genuineness of many Poltergeist cases has been established."² Readers of *THE MONTH* will probably not need to be informed that this is a view which is whole-heartedly shared by the present writer. But Mr. Price tells us further :

As a lad I was deeply impressed and absolutely convinced of certain manifestations of this kind. The house in question was in Shropshire, and the typical stone-throwing, window-rattling and door-slamming "ghost" made a great impression on my adolescent and receptive mind, and from then onwards I decided to become an investigator. I believe in Poltergeists—again from experience and experiment—and have investigated them in several European countries.³

Of Eleonore Zugun, whom some readers may remember as one of the sensational psychic subjects whom Mr. Price brought to London some few years ago, he tells us a striking experience which marked his first introduction to the girl at Vienna in the rooms of Countess Wassilko-Serecki in 1926. He had brought a toy for the child, she was then thirteen years of age, but Eleonore, in playing with it, broke it. The Countess and Eleonore stood together trying to repair the disaster, Mr. Price looking on, when "a long steel stiletto paper-knife shot across the room *from behind me*, just miss-

¹ "Fifty Years of Psychical Research," p. 293.

² *Ibid.*, p. 296. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 296.

ing my head, and fell against the door." From the circumstances, which are minutely described, the narrator seems fully justified in declaring: "there was no tangible being behind me, and the paper-knife could not have been thrown normally."¹ We are, moreover, told that the flight of the stiletto was only the first of many other telekinetic phenomena which occurred during the same evening.

A notable section of the Introduction of the volume is also devoted to Poltergeist cases. Mr. Price gives a pretty full résumé of the well-known Ringcroft disturbances in Galloway (1695), adding this comment:

I reiterate that the chief value of the above report lies in the fact that it has been carefully drawn up and attested by a number of educated persons of repute, and that each manifestation is witnessed separately. This procedure is not common to-day; that such a document should have been published nearly 250 years ago is, I think, remarkable.²

It seems to me curious that, holding these views, Mr. Price should suggest in his Preface that the present volume is "a continuation of Podmore's classic history of the alleged abnormal which he termed 'Modern Spiritualism.' This work was published in London in 1902, and is still the standard book of the period with which it deals." I may confess that I am far from considering Podmore's book a masterly performance. It is extremely slovenly—one is loath to say unscrupulous—in its treatment of all evidence which does not happen to fall in with Podmore's own prepossessions. He was entirely disdainful of Poltergeists and, indeed, of physical phenomena in general. No one, I submit, who will take the trouble to study patiently the discussions on certain alleged Poltergeist cases which he carried on against Andrew Lang, can fail to discover that, so far as the presentation of the evidence is concerned, the sceptic appears to great disadvantage. Podmore, in fact, for his part, turned down Poltergeists altogether. It is noteworthy, then, that the author of the present book, while proclaiming himself in some sort a disciple of Podmore, not only gives prominence and apparently lends credence to the Ringwood disturbances, but follows the story up with a synopsis of the stupendous smashings of "the Stockwell Ghost." "My object," writes Mr. Price, "in citing this

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

case is to emphasize the fact that it was properly recorded and signed, and many similar cases to-day are not so well authenticated." Now Mr. Podmore, in speaking of the Stockwell case, simply turns down the story as a piece of trickery. He says the falsehood was exposed, but he does not give the slightest reference by which one could learn how it was proved to be a fraud. The disturbance caused was, at any rate, sufficiently great for the incident to be noticed, twelve months later, in *The Annual Register*. In connexion with Poltergeists I may confess to feeling somewhat disappointed to find that the present volume contains no account of the Borley Rectory disturbances, upon the history of which spook it has been for some time stated that Mr. Price is busily engaged. Upon a fly-leaf of the present book we find, with a list of the author's other works, an announcement in these terms: "The Most Haunted House in England: Ten Years' Investigation of Borley Rectory (in preparation)." This is followed up (on pp. 296—297) by a very sensational announcement of what we are to expect in the way of thrills, when the account of this ten years' research actually sees the light. Some who have noted a certain change of feeling in our sceptic's attitude to psychic phenomena, will be tempted to think that his experiences at Borley have, in some sort, wrought a conversion. Even here the paragraph headed "My Haunted Rectory" begins with this sentence: "Just as my first 'case' convinced me of the existence of what the Germans call 'rattling spirits' (i.e., *Poltergeister*), so one of my latest has finally and absolutely convinced me of what, for want of a better term, we call 'ghosts.' " Mr. Harry Price, therefore, is a "ghost-hunter" no longer. He has found.

In the chapter "I believe . . .," already referred to, the author, passing from "pseudopods," those teleplasmic make-shift limbs which seem to be extruded from certain mediums in place of hands and feet, affirms that if these pseudopods have been witnessed under perfect conditions of control, as he is convinced they have, then it is no longer open to us to maintain that even full-form materializations are impossible. What many readers will find the most attractive pages of this survey is the account given of such a materialization of a young girl of which Mr. Price was the privileged witness. I have no right to spoil the story by going into detail. It concerns a French lady, resident in England, Madame Z, who came to this country after her husband had been killed in the War.

There was a daughter "Rosalie" who, to her mother's indescribable distress, died of diphtheria in 1921. After a while Mme. Z began to be awakened in the night by the child's voice crying "Mother." Through Spiritualist connexions she was led, towards the end of 1928, to start a series of séances with a few friends, and "in the late spring of 1929 'Rosalie' materialized without warning, and made her presence known (of course, in complete darkness) by again gently clasping her mother's hand." The figure was not only felt, but seen in mirrors coated with luminous paint, and finally began to speak audibly. Mr. Price was invited to investigate the case and was accorded astonishing freedom in directing operations and imposing tests. In the end Mr. Price was able to feel completely the warm figure of the child as well as to see it in the light of the luminous plaques. He could, moreover, feel her pulse which was beating at the rate of about 90. "Rosalie" was not very ready to respond to the attempts made to induce her to speak. But at last, when Mr. Price asked her: "Rosalie, do you love your mummy?" he tells us that "I saw the expression on her face change and her eyes light up. 'Yes,' she lisped."

Mr. Price goes into considerable detail as to the precautions he took to exclude every possible avenue of fraud. Writing his report the same night, when his impressions were still fresh, it seems clear that he was himself still moved by deep feeling. He describes himself as "wondering if 'Rosalie' was a genuine spirit entity or whether the whole thing was an elaborate hoax. If the latter, then the hoax has been going on for years, and no actress in the world could simulate Mme. Z's poignant emotion."¹

Mr. Price, though evidently considerably impressed by this and one or two other personal experiences, seems a little reluctant to quit his attitude of scepticism, and, as is apt to happen to him, makes at times sweeping statements hardly reconcilable with his admissions elsewhere. On p. 191 we read concerning mediums: "the subconscious 'fraud' may be so like the conscious variety that we may be unable to tell the difference, though the fact remains that at least 99 per cent of all alleged psychic happenings are fraudulent." This is a rather surprising estimate in face of the fact that the genuineness of the most remarkable phenomena of Eusapia Palla-

¹ See "Fifty Years of Psychical Research," pp. 130—144 and 294.

dino is not questioned, though at Cambridge and elsewhere "she cheated continuously, as she frankly admitted." In connexion particularly with the sittings held with Eusapia by Mr. Everard Feilding and two other representatives of the S.P.R. at Naples in 1908, Mr. Price says: "They witnessed undoubted genuine phenomena and wrote a lengthy report on their visit. Everard Feilding was, I think, the greatest sceptic regarding psychic phenomena I have ever met. But a few years before his death he wrote me to the effect that just as Rudi Schneider (in 1929—1930) convinced me of physical phenomena, so Eusapia had convinced him."

This statement I can personally confirm. Shortly before Feilding went to Naples I met him at luncheon in a friend's house in company with Archbishop (afterwards Cardinal) Bourne. The ladies having withdrawn when coffee appeared, Feilding, rather, I think, to the Archbishop's uneasiness, kept the conversation fixed on psychic phenomena, and *inter alia* stated very positively that in the course of a multitude of investigations made for the S.P.R. he had never come across one case in which trickery did not betray itself when the inquiry was pushed far enough. A few months later, after his return from Naples, I happened to meet Feilding in the street. We chatted for a while, and in answer to a question of mine regarding Naples: "Well," he said, "I am satisfied now that things do happen," and he proceeded to give me some outline of the experiences afterwards detailed in full in his masterly report.¹ But if Eusapia cheated and tricked, but, nevertheless, on occasion produced phenomena which were astoundingly genuine, why may we not make the same allowance for such detected impostors as Eglinton, "Dr." Monck, Mme. d'Espérance, and a crowd of others. Such people know that they cannot be sure of securing manifestations; on the other hand, their livelihood goes if their séances are barren. Hence the more weak-minded and unscrupulous among them equip themselves with all the paraphernalia of trickery (muslin, false beards, reaching-rods, etc.) to meet the possible emergency. These things are found in their luggage, but all the same this, I submit, constitutes no proof that they produced no genuine phenomena. The evidence given in

¹ For Mr. Price's views on Eusapia see his book, pp. 59 and 74—76. He is mistaken, however, in saying that we first hear of her in a letter from Ercole Chiaia to Lombroso in 1888. As early as 1875 we find in the English Spiritualist journals that Signor Damiano was interested in her, though the name is sometimes miswritten or misprinted Padalino.

court for the materializations occurring under the mediumship even of such a man as "Dr." Monck is not easily set aside. The famous scientist, Alfred Russel Wallace, could have no reason to perjure himself, and the occurrence described took place in broad daylight.¹

Despite, then, all the labours of the Society for Psychical Research, of Mr. Price's more recent organization with its laboratory and collection of literature, and of the claims to experimental scientific technique made for Dr. Rhine's newly-born "Extra-Sensory Perception," the problems of which Professor Henry Sidgwick spoke fifty-seven years ago still remain unsolved. The case of the non-professional medium, Mrs. Crandon ("Margery"), is typical, in a sense, of our incompetence. This lady has been more investigated and more written about than any medium in the world, and that, not at a period when we were supposed to be groping in the dark, but by up-to-date experts. Mr. Price's comments on this case are in more senses than one revelatory. He points out that Dr. Dingwall, the Research Officer of the S.P.R., had twenty-nine sittings with the medium, but was unable to come to a definite conclusion as to the genuineness or otherwise of her phenomena. To this Mr. Price adds on his own account :

Whether the mediumship be a hoax or not, I cannot say, as I was never given an opportunity of testing the medium. Crandon refused to permit me to investigate, though, as I have stated, I was fortunate enough to be present at one London séance. I had instruments in my laboratory at Kensington which, in an hour, would have settled the validity or otherwise of some of the "Walter" phenomena. It is to be regretted that Crandon would not permit me to test his wife's mediumship, which, whether genuine or fraudulent, is the most remarkable ever recorded.

Is it presumptuous to think that even if Mr. Harry Price had been able to bring all his apparatus to bear upon the case, psychical researchers might possibly still be as much divided and as much in the dark as ever?

HERBERT THURSTON.

¹ On these alleged phenomena see *THE MONTH*, October, 1922, pp. 340-344.

MISCELLANEA

I. CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL NOTES

ROMAN VIGNETTES.

XX

SAN CLEMENTE

BETWEEN the Lateran and the Colosseum are some two or three uninspiring streets which wander across a spur of the Caelian hill. One of them glories in the name of St. John. Saunter along it, and probably you will discover little of interest to hold your eye, nothing apparently to distract you from the fascinating vision of the Colosseum, curving in the sunlight at the street's end. But, for all that, you will have missed something though you be scarcely to blame: for its main charm is within, and a great deal of its interest lies underground. If you've the time—and somehow in the Eternal City time is not the same costly commodity as in London or New York—then turn right about, as languidly as you please if the sun be high, and retrace your steps. Half-way along the Via San Giovanni you pass on your left a dull brownish and yellow wall as it flanks an inconspicuous church and the square courtyard in front of it. "Another church," you might remark, "which is sure to be quite like the others, and it must be our fifty-fifth or forty-ninth." *Mais courage*—there are hundreds more if you really want to visit them all: and in any case, this one is most certainly not just like the others; in several ways it is unique. And should you be weary of native guides who talk to you with Neapolitan gestures and in the English of Frith-Street-atte-Soho, here you will be chaperoned by black-and-white robed friars whose harmonious accents recall the glades of Kerry and the Wicklow hills. For it is the church of San Clemente, and for many a decade has it been in the care of Irish Dominicans.

Clement was the fourth in the long series of Roman Pontiffs. Linus and Cletus came between St. Peter and himself, but it has been asserted, I fancy in the "*Liber Pontificalis*," that St. Peter intended Clement to be his immediate successor. Possibly he was related in some degree to the Flavian Emperors as he was associated with that devout but mysterious lady, Flavia Domitilla. History and legend play strange kaleidoscopic games with one another, but Domitilla's is an honoured name in early Christian tradition. A catacomb which bears her name is not far away from the Via Appia, and on the walls of the lower church under the present-day San Clemente—this is obviously anticipating—are two

mural paintings which have been interpreted as portraits of Flavius Clemens and Flavia Domitilla. It may be so. What is certain is that Clement was Pope of Rome, that he composed an important letter to the Church at Corinth, incidentally one of the earliest Christian documents after the Gospels and Epistles, and that he suffered martyrdom. He was the fourth Pontiff in the long succession from St. Peter to Pius XII, and he held this sacred office in the closing years of the first century. Tradition has it—who so venturesome as to unravel here the tangled skein of fact and make-believe?—that he was arrested, deported to the Crimea and compelled to labour there in the stone quarries: miracles are recorded of him, in particular that like Moses, he made water spring from barren rock to alleviate the misery of his fellow-convicts: finally, he was thrown into the sea, a heavy anchor fastened to his body. Gregory of Tours continues the story with the grief of the Crimean Christians who prayed that his body at least might be recovered. Whereupon the waters receded, and the faithful followed until they came to a small temple, built by angelic hands on the sea-bed, where the martyr's body reposed.

When you visit San Clemente, you must work, as it were, backwards: begin, that is, with the upper church into which you first enter (it dates from the eleventh century), then descend to the lower church rediscovered as lately as 1857 by the Irish Dominicans and, to conclude, go even lower to the *dominicum* or memorial chapel of St. Clement with, adjoining it, a pagan temple of Mithra. San Clemente is unique, or very nearly unique, in this: it comprises three different levels of buildings, set one upon another, an upper basilica of the eleventh, a church beneath this of the fourth, and lowermost a chapel of the second century. The earliest Christian shrines were constructed over the body of some martyred saint. Clement died in the East, but a chapel was erected to his memory, it is thought, within the actual walls of his Roman house.

The upper church is an admirable specimen of the simple basilica. It is clear and cool and restful, spacious though not large, with varied columns, plain and fluted, separating the nave from two aisles. A beautiful pavement of stone mosaic with circling and oblong patterns in black and green and white: in the centre an enclosed choir or *schola cantorum*, its marble panels ornamented with carved wreaths and crosses and the symbolic fish and vine-branch: the simple canopy over the main altar rising above the traditional remains of St. Clement and another martyr, Ignatius of Antioch. But what catches and holds the eye all the time is the magnificent mosaic of the apse, a glorious harmony of green on burnished gold.

The date of this church can be fixed easily, at least within a span of years. The original building was so badly destroyed by Robert Guiscard's soldiery in 1084 that its ruins were filled up

with masonry and rubbish, and the new church was constructed on top of it. Fifteen years later, Paschal II was elected Pope in a conclave held in the reconstructed edifice. Late eleventh century—the time is thus reasonably certain. The mosaic, however, is a little more than a hundred years its junior. Now it is known that Giotto was in Rome from 1303 to 1304, so that the work may very well be his. It is certainly one of the most satisfying of all Roman mosaics. High above the arch of the apse can be seen a half figure of our Lord, a book clasped in His left hand, while the right is raised in blessing: at His either side an evangelist with an appropriate symbol: to the right of the arch, as you regard it, are seated St. Peter and St. Clement, Peter introducing his successor to Christ and explaining to that successor how faithfully he had kept his promise to him. "*Respice promissum Clemens a me tibi Xtum*" (Clement, look upon the Christ I promised to thee) is the inscription that runs along the side of a boat upon which Clement's feet are resting. On the other side Saints Paul and Lawrence balance the composition: the ship of Clement, symbolic alike of Peter's bark and his own martyrdom at sea, finds its counterpart in a gridiron, suggestive of Lawrence's martyrdom by fire. Around the mosaic border the gold-set lettering: "Glory on high to God seated upon His throne and on earth peace to men of good will." This motif of the angels' Christmas song finds further expression in the picture of Jeremias with Jerusalem (under that of Peter) and of Isaias with Bethlehem (beneath that of Paul): along an horizontal band joining the two cities are twelve sheep that turn inwards towards the Mystic Lamb, white-haloed and amber-crowned: the whole rhythm of this frieze is away from Jerusalem to Bethlehem.

But it is in the curve of the apse that the mosaic is most attractive. Round the inner edge runs a broad border, adorned with vines and ears of wheat which spring from a vase at either side and rise to the central monogram under the half figure of the Saviour. At the top, wavy iridescent circles from which a hand stretches forth to indicate the divine power: beneath it as if supported by that Almighty hand, an elongated cross, Christ at the centre, doves perched along all four arms. Though sustained from on high, the cross appears to take root in the earth and to rise out of it as the main stem of the mystical vine. From this stem proceed branches, wreaths and tendrils, turning, twisting and whirling in a lovely riot of vivid green on gold. Our Lord's own imagery of the vine and branches has come to portrayal. Underneath runs the message: "The Church of Christ we shall liken to that vine . . . which the Law had withered and the Cross hath now made to bloom again." A hart browses peacefully at the foot of the vine stem and from the waters of the four paradisaal streams which gush from it stags are drinking.

Linger in the upper church as long as you wish: there is much to study: side chapels discreetly hidden, one of them quite modern, dedicated by desire of Leo XIII to the memory of Saints Cyril and Methodius, the apostles of the Slavs. It was Cyril who brought back from the Crimea the supposed relics of Clement, and later was himself buried in the lower church. To the left, near the entrance, a chapel of St. Catherine of Alexandria adorned with frescoes by Masaccio: the figures are bright and boldly rendered, for Masaccio was already feeling for depth and perspective: over the columns seventeenth-century renderings of Clement's life and death.

From the sacristy a wide stairway, constructed in 1866, leads downwards to the original church of the late fourth or early fifth century. St. Jerome spoke of it, Pope Zosimus held a council there, and Gregory the Great preached in it on at least two solemn occasions. The tireless excavations of the Irish Dominicans have now recovered it. As it stands, it is one of the earliest Christian churches in existence.

In the narthex, just before you advance into the body of the church, are the remains of early frescoes. One reveals our Lord enthroned with the Archangel Michael and St. Andrew to His right, Gabriel and St. Clement on the left: two clerics, unnamed, kneel before Him. One of these is bearded and holds a book of the Gospels towards the Saviour: Gabriel's hand rests protectingly upon his shoulder. The two clerics are possibly, even probably, the Slav apostles, Cyril and Methodius: the picture may well mark the place of Cyril's entombment. Others record—strange how much of their colouring has been preserved—the stories associated with Clement's death: here can be seen a procession, led by the bishop from a turreted city, and advancing to the chapel of St. Clement under the sea, which every year—so the legend ran—on the Saint's feast day, was left exposed by the receding tide. One is reminded of—is it Debussy's "*Cathédrale engloutie*," the Breton church under the waves fabled to rise mysteriously to the surface only to sink once again in the moonlight as mysteriously? To the right of the same fresco a mother is depicted recovering her child whom she, somewhat thoughtlessly, had mislaid three hundred and sixty-four days previously on the last feast day of the Saint: the child, though swallowed by the waters, remained safe and sound for a year minus a day under the protection of the Saint.

Within the church, now attached to the bare brick walls, fragments of what may have been a vast representation of the Last Judgment: a lovely Byzantine Madonna, a trifle stern and expressionless, with circlets of pearls round her hair and jewels framing her face: further stories of the Roman Saint, this time of the translation of his relics from the Chersonese.

Another descent of twenty steps and you reach the foundation of an ancient Roman house. For a long time after the original

excavation it was scarcely possible to descend so far owing to the rising level of water. That this is now possible is due in large measure to the generosity of Cardinal O'Connell whose titular church is San Clemente, and of numerous American Catholics. *Dominicum Clementis*—this is how the memorial chapel to St. Clement came to be known: the expression *dominicum* was never a common one, and after the fourth century there is no trace of it. But clearly the reference is to a shrine in honour of the martyr where Christians might forgather even though his relics were preserved elsewhere. Tradition adds that the house in question was actually Clement's own: consequently it would be one of the places in which St. Peter would certainly have lodged.

Across a passage from this oratory is a large chamber, thirty feet long and some twenty feet in width, with a vaulted roof, decorated with eleven *luminaria*, oblong and circular, in coloured mosaic design: the rest of the ceiling is overlaid with small stones—after the manner of a grotto you might be compelled to visit at an English seaside town. The lofty room served as a temple of Mithra. Here the normal sequence seems to have been reversed. Usually the pagan building came first, the Christian followed it. In this case, however, the oratory of Clement dates from the early second century and the Mithraeum was established only when this Christian property had been later confiscated. At the farther end of the chamber was a niche for the Mithraic statue: below the niche a square basin built of brick, to contain water or to receive the blood of the bull that would be sacrificed; near it some portions of an altar: to either side along the room are raised platforms with three steps leading to them, tables, maybe, at which those present partook of the sacrificial meal. The atmosphere is chill and eerie as if the spirit of ancient evil still lingered amid these walls.

As a matter of fact, the cult of Mithra was one of the least evil of those many odd mystery-religions that flourished in Imperial Rome. Mithra was a Persian deity, one of the regiment of arch-angels created by Ormuzd, the lord of the Iranian heaven. Later he was identified with the Sun-god; a ritual grew and soldiers, Eastern merchants and civil servants, three widely-travelled classes, carried his *cultus* with them. It made little appeal to the strictly Greek world, and there is scant evidence of it in Africa, Spain and Western Gaul. But in the further East it was strong, and it followed the wake of the legionaries along the Rhine and the Danube. Remains of temples of Mithra or evidence of his statues and inscriptions have been discovered at Florence and Bologna, throughout Carinthia and the Tyrol, at Cologne and Boulogne and, in England, at Chester, Caerleon, York and London. Mithra was the lord of light and the skies, symbolized in the sun: born miraculously he had to hunt and slay the mystic bull; and out of this sacrificial death came further regeneration. The

cult boasted an elaborate ritual, an hierarchy of ministers and a series of initiation rites. There was little variation in the images of Mithra; the altar found here at San Clemente underground and now re-established in this Mithraeum is typical and representative. As it stands (some of the upper portion has been lost) it is four feet high and two and a half across. On one face against a grotto background the deity is shown, clad in short tunic with a cloak floating over his left shoulder: on his head a Phrygian cap, the "liberty-bonnet" of French revolutionaries: left knee firmly planted upon the conquered bull, his left hand grasps its nostrils while the right, with a short dagger, administers the *coup de grace*: at the foot of the monument a dog and serpent, his invariable attendants, lick the blood that flows in trickles from the wound. On two sides of the altar are companions, dressed like their master, holding lighted torches; the one aloft to symbolize the rising sun, the other downwards as a sign of the *tramonto*, the going down thereof.

Those interesting, but frequently highly imaginative, mortals who write volumes on comparative religion have made much of Mithraism. It had its importance, and has had its day much as has the comparative study of religions. Strange that the feast of Mithra's birth should have been celebrated on December 25th and been called "Natalis Invicti," the birthday of the unconquered or, if you like, the unconquerable. But Mithra has joined Pan—and Pan, as you know, is long since dead.

XXI

TRAJAN'S SHOPPING CENTRE

For a long time the ancient classics were imparted to the young in a manner that was slightly unreal. As soon as you had mastered sufficient of the necessary grammar and syntax, you learnt what Roman poets sang, what Roman generals did and what Roman politicians said. Virgil, Cæsar, Cicero—here was a goodly trinity: the first assuredly a sublime poet, the second a specialist on marching, the third the human equivalent of a modern department of propaganda. But nobody appeared to care overmuch what was done by the 99 per cent not included under the triple heading of the poet, the general and the politician, or even what these thought about the more favoured 1 per cent. True, you might learn from Plautus the kind of bad language used by the slaves, and from Tacitus what bitter things could be said about an Emperor, if you had the talent and the Emperor were safely dead: and, of course, after a prolonged study of Juvenal you were qualified to "debunk" most of Roman life. To be fair, it must be granted that this has now largely altered. There are admirable volumes in English on Roman social life where you may discover after what fashion the people lived, how they dressed and what they ate, the manner in

which they amused themselves: in short, you can find out not merely what was done and spoken in literary, military or governmental circles, but the very conditions under which the ordinary citizen and his slaves had to exist.

One of the most illuminating sections of the Roman exhibition held from September, 1937, until September, 1938, to commemorate the bi-millenary of Augustus Cæsar (some description of it has already appeared in *THE MONTH* for December, 1938, under the title of "The Immortality of Rome") was that which documented social and private life. There were models, pictures, statistics of schools, libraries and music; of shops and styles and fashions; of medical prescriptions and dentists' tools; of fish and bees and fishing and hunting and wine and food: in a few words—of all those matters which are part of an individual's care, but high above which the political historian soars on uninterested wing. History's verdict upon the achievements of Julius Cæsar is by now sufficiently evident: what is not so clear is what the average Roman housekeeper thought of him. Was he her hero or a public nuisance whose campaigns had increased the price of meat or bread? Were the returning legionaries welcomed with garlands or told to keep their muddy sandals off the polished atrium floor? To this day we can read what Cicero thought of some measure or other in the Forum: what his audience thought of Cicero is not so easy of discovery, though in his wordier and longer-winded passages it is possible to hazard a shrewd guess.

Let us, however, confine ourselves to shopping. Now shopping is an important feature of modern life. No doubt it was less so in the ancient world where households were more self-contained as slaves were handy to perform all necessary manual labour: much of what is purchased to-day, was then manufactured at home. The Roman shopkeepers had other grievances besides this. When the city was small, they had their shops in the central Forum which was the centre of all civic life. Here might be found the *tabernae veteres* and the more elaborate *tabernae novae*: tailors and butchers, bakers and candlestick-makers presumably rubbed shoulders together: it was possibly more reminiscent of Banbury Fair than Bond Street. As the city grew, the Forum developed a more exclusive air. The ordinary shops were pushed gradually away in the direction of the Quirinal, and special markets were opened, the *Boarium* for meat, the *Holitorium* for green vegetables, the *Pistorium* for flour and meal. The shops were forced to yield still more place when smaller Imperial Fora were laid out to the Quirinal side of the older Forum, for example, by Augustus, Nerva and Trajan; for these were used for select purposes, contained libraries, temples and business houses, but only the most elegant of shops.

Under the Emperor Trajan, who ruled at the turn of the first

century A.D., an attempt was made to remedy some of the hardships of the shopkeepers. One of the most interesting of recent "finds" has been that of a shopping centre, a series of arcades, planned at his request. It consisted of a semi-circular building, flanking that Emperor's Forum to the north and leaving an open space between the Forum and the arcades. On the ground floor were eleven large shops (large as ancient shops went) with a wide entrance framed in travertine. From either end of this front series rose a stairway to an upper floor which had a roofed-in gallery with shops opening off from it: further flights of steps led to higher corridors and to a vaulted hall with still more shops. This work of excavation is comparatively recent, but already some hundred and fifty such *tabernae* have been unearthed. They were apparently well assorted: here one store for fruit and vegetables where the interior was so shallow that half the produce was exposed to sun and rain; another there for wine and oil as is clear from broken fragments of terra-cotta and the sink still visible in the stone floor; here a water basin for the fishmonger to cool and freshen his wares; and well inside, away from the stronger odours of edible goods, neater apartments of the jeweller and perfumer. The Roman shop was not light and airy: it was dark and cool as are smaller Italian shops to-day. Light streamed in through the open doorway and at times through an additional skylight: and from the shop steps ascended to inner rooms.

This particular centre had three approaches, at least, from its other aspect: elderly and asthmatic shoppers were not compelled to clamber up and down the stairways. In fact, a special street, the *Via Biberatica*, fronted with shop-entrances, bordered it on the side remote from the Forum. Later the whole structure fell into decay and was abandoned, and on its ruins medieval castles were erected. Turbulent nobles fought their petty quarrels over the places where earlier tradesmen had cried and sold their wares.

J.M.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN SWEDEN.

READERS of Sigrid Undset's "*Kristin Lavransdatter*" will be aware that Catholicism once played a part in the life of Sweden comparable to its place in our own Medieval England, but the majority of English Catholics are probably more than a little hazy about the history of the Church in that country, and still more about its prospects at the present day. The object of this article is to trace the fortunes of the Church from its beginnings and to give some estimate of its present condition.

The earliest known missionary effort for the evangelization of Sweden occurred in the ninth century. Until then, whilst Britain

was fast assimilating the Faith and sending out missionaries to spread the Gospel on the Continent, Sweden remained in the grip of a barbarous paganism. It was in the year 829 that the first Christian missionaries seem to have set foot on Swedish soil. Ansgar and Autbert, Benedictine monks from the monastery of Corvey in Westphalia, had been sent by the Emperor Ludwig the Pious with rich presents to King Björn ("The Bear") whose capital, the trading centre of Birka, was some eighteen miles from the modern city of Stockholm, on the island of Björkö which lies on the waters of Lake Mälär. After an adventurous voyage, during which the missionaries were attacked by Viking pirates who robbed them of all they possessed, they managed to land and made their way on foot to the lake, and after much difficulty and hardship at length arrived at the town of Birka. Unable to commend themselves to the king by the gifts from the Emperor which had been taken from them, they yet remained to preach the word of God, but after a stay of eighteen months they had had only a moderate success, though their converts included a Viking chief, one Hergeir, who built a small church, the first Christian sanctuary to be set up in the Scandinavian peninsula.

On his return to his monastery, Ansgar was soon appointed Archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen, but did not forget the infant church in Sweden. In addition to sending further missionaries there, he himself repeated his former journey in 850, and his visit gave new life to the struggling community at Birka. He died in 865, and though the Church in Sweden was at that time no bigger than a grain of mustard-seed, yet he truly deserves the name of Apostle of Sweden.

It was about the year 1000 that a more general movement towards Christianity can be recorded. New missionaries, mostly from England, then came to work in the vineyard planted by Ansgar. In the year 1008, Olof, the first Christian King of Sweden, was baptized by St. Sigfried, whilst St. Eskil and St. David also laboured there. St. Botvid, of Swedish parentage, had been baptized in England and returned to his home, not far from what is now Stockholm, where he preached and was martyred. The fierce, war-loving natives were not altogether the best material for Christianity to work upon, and we need not believe that Baptism necessarily altered the disposition of its recipients all at once, but there can be no sort of doubt that the gradual change that came over the morals of the country was due, in large measure, to the activities of Christian priests and bishops, who set their faces sternly against the prevalent vices of drunkenness, polygamy, child-exposure and violence of every kind. The lack of schools, of printed books and of an educated clergy made progress difficult in the extreme, but the work went on. Bishoprics were established at Skara and later at Lindköping, and at the

latter place the Papal legate, Nicholas of Albano—familiar to Englishmen as Nicholas Breakspeare, later to be Adrian IV—held a national synod in 1152. Twelve years later, the country was declared to be an independent Ecclesiastical province, with Upsala as the metropolitan Archiepiscopal See. (It is of interest to Englishmen that the first Bishop of Upsala, Henrik, was himself an Englishman, who was martyred in Finland.)

From this time forward the power of the Church increased rapidly. In the year 1200 Sverker the Younger freed the clergy from the secular jurisdiction and made the payment of tithes obligatory. Further developments such as the release of the clergy from the obligation to take the oath of loyalty to the secular powers (1248) and from the obligation of paying taxes (1281), enhanced still further the independence of ecclesiastical authority, and of course the second of these measures laid the foundation of no small wealth, and inaugurated a period of material prosperity which was reflected in the building of beautiful cathedrals and churches. Cistercian monks founded monasteries and in the course of the thirteenth century the Dominicans extended their activities in the Scandinavian countries, with the Franciscans not far behind. It was in 1369 that the great St. Birgitta, or Bridget, founded the "Order of Our Lord," the Brigittines, the mother-house at Vadstena on Lake Vättern being the parent of many establishments in Germany, Estonia, Finland, England, Poland and elsewhere. We may refer here to the most famous of English Brigittine monks, Blessed Richard Reynolds, from the Sion monastery of Isleworth.

Unfortunately, as so often happens, prosperity led to a decline in fervour, and whilst the next 150 years produced a number of Bishops marked by a true apostolic spirit and a zeal for learning, too many of them were embroiled in the civil warfare that prevailed. The union of the three Scandinavian countries which had been achieved at the end of the fourteenth century had broken up, but, at the beginning of the sixteenth, Christian II of Denmark forced the Swedes to return. His victories were marked by ruthless butchery, and as the Archbishop of Upsala was a strong supporter of the idea of union and of Christian II, whose power he invoked for the removal of his personal enemies, including two Bishops, the Church fell rapidly into disrepute and the way was opened for the spread of Lutheran teachings. This was helped on by the new king, Gustavus Vasa, who won the throne of Sweden as the result of a successful peasants' rising. At first he showed favour to the Church, but soon the temptation to loot its wealth led him to encourage the teaching of the Reformers, whilst he found it convenient to assume the title of *summus episcopus*. A nineteenth-century Protestant historian, Reuterdaahl, Lutheran Archbishop of Upsala, sums the matter up thus: "We have no

proof that King Gustavus Vasa went over to the Reformers through conviction or spiritual desire. On the contrary, his pressing need of money and the greed with which he satisfied it at the cost of the Church show that he favoured the Reformers because they had no claim on Church property." By 1536 all the Sees, many of which for one reason or another had been vacant for years, were filled by Lutheran Bishops.

The history of the Church in Sweden since that time affords several quite striking parallels to that of English Catholicism. Thus, under John III, the son of Gustavus, a sort of "Marian revival" was attempted, the king himself, though not a Catholic, being strongly attracted towards the Faith, because of the influence of his Polish wife. When Father Antonio Possevino, S.J., came to Sweden to negotiate for a return to the allegiance of Rome, he persuaded John to enter the Church, but Rome could not consent to the Swedish demands and no permanent settlement was reached. Under the next king, the Augsburg Confession was adopted as the State religion (1593). Penal times followed. Many were executed. Converts were punished by deprivation of civil rights and perpetual banishment.

In 1780 liberty of conscience was granted to foreigners settled in Sweden, but, though the Pope appointed a Vicar Apostolic for Sweden, little could be effected as Swedish citizens were still forbidden to become Catholics. In 1860 the punishment of perpetual exile was removed, and in 1873 a law was passed permitting members of the national Church over eighteen years of age to enter any other religious society.

Nevertheless, progress is very slow. It is estimated that there are 5,000 Catholics in Sweden, 1,800 of them in Stockholm, where there are five churches and public chapels. The number of converts every year is about 30, which does little more than keep the total stable. The reasons for this are not so much the actual "penal laws" which bear no more hardly on the Catholic community at large than do our own similar English disabilities, as the smallness of the numbers and the isolation in which members of the Church must live. Thus, in the town of Gefle, some 110 miles from Stockholm, the nominal congregation consists of 60 or 70 Catholics, of whom 40 actually reside in the town. An average Sunday attendance in such conditions is not likely to be more than a handful. And that is the only knowledge these people have of the Church in practice.

A second difficulty is the vast distances separating these small outposts of the Faith one from the other. Sweden is more than twice as long as England and Scotland, Trelleborg, in the most southerly part of Sweden is 1,300 miles from the northernmost frontier. In this far-stretching territory there are about 5,000 Catholics, as we have said, scattered amongst six million in-

habitants. The thirteen Catholic stations are distributed over this immense field of labour, preferably in the larger industrial centres. Nearly every Catholic has a long way to go to get to Mass, and though in Stockholm itself many will be not more than a quarter of an hour from church, elsewhere most live 2, 4 or more miles away, and distances of 12 miles or more are not unusual. Not long ago a Catholic family, intending to migrate to Sweden from Germany, inquired where the nearest church would be. They received the answer: "the nearest church is 180 miles away, the parish church being 210 miles away." Again, one hears of an Irish lady living in North Sweden, 500 miles away from a church. Her husband is a Protestant, and as the son's only direct contact with the Church is when the parish priest comes to say Mass, perhaps once or twice a year, it is difficult not to wonder how his Faith is likely to fare. And, in parenthesis, it may be pointed out how all but universal are mixed marriages in Sweden.

One last difficulty with which Catholics are faced is the widespread ignorance, prejudice and consequent misrepresentation of all things pertaining to the Faith. Catholics in England know something of this, but the extent to which such hostility exists in Sweden is a very serious obstacle to the spreading of the Faith.

A.R.

Causa Nostrae Laetitiae

WEARY the miles as the road unrolled
But you heard the Seraphs' song
 And the hearts of heedless men were cold
But you watched the angels throng;
 No home you had nor wealth of gold
But a Babe to whom worlds belong.

The lamp in the cave grew dark and dim
But over it shone the star;
 King Herod lay in wait for Him
Greater than all kings are;
 And Herod's men were stern and grim
But Wise Men came from far.

The Cross was tall and gaunt and stark
His words were soft and kind;
 Your eyes each gaping wound could mark
The Ransom of mankind;
 And day put on a shroud of dark
But naught His Light could blind.

T.C.

II. OUR CONTEMPORARIES

- AMERICA: Oct. 14, 1939. **He Came into the Church and therein found Peace**, by Leslie E. Dunkin. [A moving story of the profound peace which awaits the convert to the Faith.]
- BLACKFRIARS: Oct., 1939. **Biography of Father Bede Jarrett (V)**, Father John-Baptist Reeves, O.P. [Contains some admirable extracts from the writings of Father Bede Jarrett composed during the last war.]
- CATHOLIC HERALD: Oct. 20, 1939. **A Concrete Plan of Peace**, by Count Michael de la Bedoyere. [Has some balanced and careful thoughts on the whole question of war aims and the future of Europe.]
- COMMONWEAL: Sept. 29, 1939. **Three Days in Danzig**, by Catherine de Hueck. [Graphic impressions of life and feeling in the "Free City" just before its incorporation in the Reich.]
- DOSSIERS DE L'ACTION POPULAIRE: Sept. 15, 1939. **C'est la Civilisation Chrétienne que nous défendons**, by G. Robinot Marcy. [A timely examination of the preliminaries of the present conflict from the French Catholic point of view.]
- DOWNSIDE REVIEW: Oct., 1939. **Flos Martyrum**, by Dom Maurice Bell, O.S.B. [A revealing summary of the sufferings of Catholics, both lay and religious, during the Spanish war.]
- DUBLIN REVIEW: Oct., 1939. **The Beginnings of Elementary Education in England in the Second Spring**, by A. C. F. Beales. [A well-documented study of a Catholic education movement in London during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.]
- ÉTUDES: Oct. 5 and 20, 1939. **Chez Nos Amis du Portugal**, by Père Paul Doncœur, S.J. [An interesting and sympathetic account of a journey of young Frenchmen through the cities and to the shrines of Portugal.]
- IRISH ECCLESIASTICAL RECORD: Oct., 1939. **Équipes Sociales**, by Mina J. Moore. [A clear introduction to a new method of Catholic Social work in France which has spread also to South America.]
- MUSIC AND LITURGY: Oct., 1939. **The Latin Accent**, by Dom Gregory Murray, O.S.B. [Has some valuable considerations on Latin accentuation for those who take a keen interest in the liturgy and in Church music.]
- TABLET: Oct. 14, 1939. **The Enemies of Europe**. [An excellent editorial which reviews the association of Nazi-ism and Communism and shows how one is outside, and the other false to the European tradition.]
- VIE ÉCONOMIQUE ET SOCIALE: Sept.—Oct., 1939. **Les Reniements du Chancelier Hitler**, by P.D.S. [A Belgian version of the Hitler Calendar.]

REVIEWS

I—THE MEANING OF CATHOLICISM¹

EVEN the raw convert, whose appetite is insatiable, will take a long time to digest what Mr. Watkin here offers him. Here and there Mr. Watkin is a little stiff. He sometimes uses words, or weaves arguments, that are not only not simple, but are unnecessarily heavy. Yet the convert aforesaid (and still more the mature Catholic) does not complain. Discipline is one of the trials that are good in themselves: Mr. Watkin, as it were, makes us sit up and take trouble if we are duly to get what he gives. What he gives is so good, so interesting, so stimulating, that we forget the price.

The main argument of the book involves criticism as well as exposition of Catholicism in its practice. "The heavenly treasure," he apologizes, "is borne in earthen vessels." Yet the vessels are good enough not only to bear, but to deserve, constructive criticism. If, as Mr. Watkin premises, Catholic Christianity is "the supreme and the most complete revelation of religious truth, and the philosophy which it implies the most balanced and comprehensive interpretation of human experience," then, in so far as it fails in its practice to be literally catholic, it has failed in its trust. Not that Mr. Watkin criticizes the Church as such. Indeed, he prefaces his treatise with the comprehensive statement of faith that "the Catholic Church is the pillar and ground of the Truth, and our Infallible Teacher." Nor have I (for one) read anything which more triumphantly justifies such loyalty.

Yet one of the crude things (and crudity not infrequently lies near to the truth) that still appals him who honestly seeks the truth, is the obstinate old spectacle of professing Christians divided among themselves: divided, not in the minor human vagaries of outlook, but in the essential, elementary and obvious correlation of Christianity with one single Christian Church. If, asks the wobbling, but still hesitant pagan, the Faith inspired by Christ cannot unite the body of professing Christians even into a broad integrity of institutional practice, how can they dare propagate a missionary cause; how can they, even reasonably, invite the outsider inside—when the inside will strike an initial chill of puzzled wonder to the honest pilgrim? The logical answer, that the Catholic Church still stands as the Catholic Church, open to the prodigal, does not satisfy the pagan. He wants to know why the prodigal does not return; and the question is fair. Mr. Watkin is, above

¹ *The Catholic Centre*. By E. I. Watkin. London: Sheed & Ward. Pp. viii, 248. Price, 7s. 6d. net.

all, fair. Himself a convert, he knows what the sheltered, born Catholic does not know, namely, the Good outside the Church which holds the prodigal. "We cannot therefore hope," he writes (p. 5), "to reunite all Christians in the Church until she becomes persuasive to all by bringing out of her treasury and displaying those elements of her truth and practice which these separated brethren love and practise." Hence the Catholic "centre": the true *via media* wherein *ex hypothesi* faith, philosophy and dogma must embrace all that is undeniably true, whether originating within or without the Church itself. "The Catholic religion," says Mr. Watkin, "could not conceivably be the true religion, if any religious truth attainable by man were taught only outside it and denied by it" (p. 1).

From such an axiom Mr. Watkin explores the whole implication of Catholicism. The triumphant result of his exploration is not only a full proof that the Church does, in fact, contain all the good things, but incidentally we are given an engrossing view of those treasures themselves. What Mr. Watkin has to say about the liturgical expression of Catholicism, about prayer, about "direction" and confession, about the problem of suffering, about idealism, realism, and materialism, cannot fail to enlarge the outlook of most Catholics. On the subject, for instance, of materialism in religion, he gives the comforting (if difficult) prescription: "the true corrective of ecclesiastical materialism is not its eradication, which is impossible so long as churchmen are sinful and fallible mortals. It must be remedied, not by rejecting the Catholic centre, but by constantly returning to it. That centre is the Incarnation of Spirit. So long as the Spirit is thus apprehended as incarnate in its body, the visible, the material, so long religious materialism is impossible. Keep the window open upon the spirit—for that is an efficacious safeguard against it. Those who live in the house of the visible Church using all its visible furniture, but keeping the windows always open to the sky outside, are in the Catholic centre" (pp. 155—156).

Similarly (pp. 37 sqq), Mr. Watkin will be found comforting (though comfort as such is clearly the last thing he intends) about the charge often made that "those who practise confession and still more direction, place a human mediation between their souls and God." The chapter on "Guidance in Prayer," in which that charge is answered, is one of the best in the book. "The evidence," he writes (for instance), "of the great Catholic mystics proves that this human guidance confirms and protects inner guidance, freeing it from the danger of self-deception and illusion"; and again: "To deny that God guides us through our fellow-men, and maintain that He must always guide us directly, prescribes for His action what we imagine, *a priori*, to be the form it should take. He has, in fact, always employed human agents."

G.G.

2—THE GOLDEN VOICE¹

TO-DAY the golden voice is the prerogative of the telephone girl and the radio announcer but, long before either of these started to function, the epithet in its Greek form of Chrysostom (the "golden-mouthed") was applied to the fourth-century John of Antioch, at first a desert monk, then deacon and priest, and finally consecrated Bishop of Constantinople. The surname does not date, apparently, from his lifetime; indeed, the first recorded use of it is in 553, by Pope Vigilius. However, it is as St. John Chrysostom that this outstanding personality of the Eastern Church is universally recognized.

Obviously the epithet has to do with preaching, and a preacher John most certainly was: even to-day more than seven hundred of his discourses are extant. "From 386 till 404," writes Mr. Attwater, "first the church of Antioch and then the church of Constantinople were more famous for the preaching of St. John Chrysostom than Hippo for that of St. Augustine, or than seventeenth-century France was later to become for the sermons of Bossuet or Notre Dame for the words of Lacordaire." A tribute to his extraordinary power of speech and to the ardent spirit behind it, especially when it be remembered that, like Demosthenes, he lacked almost entirely those physical advantages which the orator is popularly imagined to enjoy.

Mr. Attwater is well qualified to give us this study of a remarkable saint. He is deeply read in the history of Eastern Churches as his previous volumes have shown: and his long collaboration with Father Thurston, S.J., in the new edition of Butler's "Lives of the Saints" is a guarantee that he is a hagiographer of no small experience. The result is a most readable and balanced biography which can be highly recommended.

Chrysostom lived in an age of great interest for the development of the Church. Though Christianity was now the accepted religion, society was not yet Christianized. He was born about the year 347, that is, only thirty years after Constantine's Edict had given toleration and peace to the Church, and little more than ten years after the capital of the Empire had been transferred to Byzantium, then renamed Constantinople. It was an era of transition. Mr. Attwater ably sketches the changing background of the period, as it is reflected vividly in the Saint's many addresses: the luxury-seeking few amid glaring poverty, sincere but occasionally turbulent monks, churchmen rising too rapidly to imperial favour, and in the East the tendency for Cæsar to interfere in the affairs of God. The heresy of Arianism was still strong, particularly in the army: and there was intense rivalry between the older

¹ *St. John Chrysostom*. By Donald Attwater. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co.; London: Coldwell. Pp. xv, 202. Price, 8s. 6d. 1939.

See of Alexandria and that of Constantinople which had an enhanced prestige after the transference there of the imperial court.

It was this rivalry which was to lead to Chrysostom's undoing. His colleague in the Egyptian diocese, Theophilus, was both able and unscrupulous. Chrysostom had his faults, the impetuosity and exaggeration which frequently go with eloquence, but he refused to meet Theophilus on the terrain of scheming and intrigues. He was finally driven into exile. Strange that St. Jerome should have sided against Chrysostom and reviled him in what Mgr. Duchesne calls *une invective abominable!* The letters from exile are full of human touches and rich with a truly Christian resignation. Nearly 250 of them have been preserved. Indeed, as Mr. Attwater observes, "to us in the twentieth century, with all our great facilities of steamships, railway trains, air mail, and postal services generally, the amount and diffusion of Chrysostom's correspondence fifteen hundred years ago is astonishing, as astonishing almost as the fact that the text of so many of his letters has been preserved down to our own day."

"A bright, cheerful, gentle soul"; so Newman wrote of St. John Chrysostom, "a sensitive heart, a temperament open to emotion and impulse; and all this elevated, refined, transformed by the touch of Heaven." Mr. Attwater's latest book provides an admirable introduction to a great man and an interesting period.

F.M.

3—THE SPLENDOUR OF THE LITURGY ¹

IT is certain that a movement has defined itself within the Church which, for want of a better name, has been called "the Liturgical Movement." The fact is too obvious, too general, too highly approved for us to regard it as anything save the work of the Holy Spirit. But we have to be careful not to departmentalize it. It includes art; but heaven forbid that it should be monopolized by craftsmen, or again by archæologists. It is practical, and includes all sorts of methods for associating the laity more actively in the celebration of the Divine Sacrifice. It is doctrinal, inasmuch as the collective nature of our sacrificial worship is stressed more than before, and it is impressive to observe how this tendency to subordinate what is purely individual in Catholic devotion to what is Catholic-wise social, pursues its wise, safe, Christian path amid the ill-starred efforts of the world at large to get rid of the individual altogether for the sake of the community. But again, we do not wish the liturgical movement to become an affair only for theologians or for catechism classes. It is, therefore, also

¹ *The Splendour of the Liturgy*. By Maurice Zundel. London: Sheed & Ward. Pp. xii, 308. Price, 7s. 6d. net.

mystical and links itself up with that other strange "revival"—that which emphasizes the doctrine of St. Paul concerning Christ's Mystical Body and the consequences due to our belonging to it. Here the guidance of the infallible Church is specially needed, but anyhow we possess it. This book, translated anonymously from the French "*Le Poème de la Sainte Liturgie*," has the advantage of combining a very solid erudition with a poetical talent and a sublime vision, though we ought to draw attention to the use made by the author of that word "poem." He takes it in its Greek sense: "A thing *made*," as though we meant by "drama" quite strictly "a thing *done*." In each case, the Act is the Holy Sacrifice. The author, then, starting with "a sacramental view of the Universe," proceeds by way of the Asperges and Holy Water to the entire Liturgy of the Mass, and, in part three, which he calls "A fount of water leaping up into eternal life," he dwells more fully on the sacramentalization of all life. His first chapter here, "At the cradle of symbolism," writes boldly, as sub-title: "*Caro Verbum facta est*." He goes on with the "Pleroma of the Cross"; the Divine Office and the "Soul of Psalmody"; and ends with the universal Prayer of Love. We have hardly thought it worth while to collect the very slight defects we think we have noticed. Examples might be: "The enthusiasm of love has betrayed the heart of a mother" (under the Roman dignity); "betrayed" suggests treachery; what is meant is that what might have been unguessed (p. 215) is displayed: on p. 242, "conceiving the ardour of Thy Spirit" hardly translates the Latin *concupere*, which, when concerned with fire or heat, definitely means "to set alight." The book, then, will be of high value to those who instinctively prefer to approach the Liturgical Movement from the spiritual and symbolical angle, though all will find in it much to nourish their spirit.

C.C.M.

4—MARRIED LOVE ¹

RIGHTLY or wrongly, non-Catholic psychologists have been emphasizing more and more the part played by sex in the whole psychological make-up of the human person. They have refused to see it as merely a department, however important, as merely one among several activities. Their particular views do not concern us at present, their immediate interest being that they have led Catholic theologians to realize that the last word was not said concerning this problem by the earlier moralists, and, still

¹ (1) *Love, Marriage and Chastity*. By Emile Mersch, S.J. London: Sheed & Ward. Pp. ix, 75. Price, 2s. 6d. (2) *Body and Spirit*. By Various Authors. Translated by Donald Attwater. London: Longmans. Pp. xii, 200. Price, 7s. 6d.

more, to understand that no adequate solution of it can be arrived at by a system that consists largely of prohibitions and warnings. It is essential to see—and to preach—the truth about sexual activity, not to allow ourselves to be misled by a mere conventional morality, to refuse to accept the all-too-prevalent Manichaean notion that married love is something slightly wicked, but covered with a sort of justifying cloak by the Sacrament of Matrimony.

Father Mersch, whose writings on the Mystical Body have led him by a natural corollary to see how all that is of the body has its place in the scheme of God's sanctifying activity, brings us boldly face to face with this fundamental truth. Love, "which leads man and woman by a movement imperceptible but inevitable, from the more or less selfish concerns of individual life, to the nobler life of devotion and self-forgetfulness" is a force by which not only does the individual arrive at his own completion and perfection, but, more fundamentally, through which the good of the race is ensured. Thus, "in marriage, individuals are the almost passive instruments of a force which is above and beyond them, which is in them but not for them . . .," and that force, the power of human love, is the expression, the symbol, the effective instrument of the unity of the whole of mankind.

In discussing, then, the ethics of sex, we cannot limit our gaze merely to the physiological processes which, essential to it, yet do not exhaust its fullness. As physiological process, sexual activity is no more ethically significant than any other bodily function. But it is when we realize how intimately these processes are related to and bound up with the whole fabric, not alone of the individual's personality but also of the whole social structure, that we realize the gravity of sexual sin. Hence, disorder here is so far-reaching in its consequences. "The worst punishment of those nations that pervert love . . . does not consist in falling birth-rates nor in deterioration of public health, but in degradation of the national character." It must be so, because it is the very structure of society that is being attacked.

It is easy, then, to see how Father Mersch's treatment underlines and emphasizes the gravity of sins against the virtue of purity, but what is perhaps the most striking feature of his book is the way in which, having sung the praises of marriage, he goes on to show how the ideal of virginity is something still higher. Only, of course, it must be virginity for the right motive. "If chastity were not charity it would be a form of sterility." But, in truth, since chastity, practised for the love of God, enables the consecrated soul to be rid of any division in its life, it comes to possess a will "more unified, more simple and thus more energetic in its action." At the same time, since the intensification of the love of God thus achieved, deepens the soul's capacity for loving, it will

become not less but more human, achieving as it were by a short cut that supernatural unity of which marriage is no more than the natural figure. "If one wishes to love human kind in the most full and perfect way, marriage has to be sacrificed, in the average case at least."

When we turn from Father Mersch's book to the collection of essays by a number of French writers—Catholic and non-Catholic, clerical and lay—we are in a less exalted atmosphere. The difference is almost that between science and art, between prose and poetry. Although Father Mersch remains severely professional and sober in his exposition, there is a quality of inspiration about his message which does not seem to be present in the rather more analytic, dry approach of these nine essayists. They deal with subjects ranging from "Sex and the Child"—a study of the mental dislocation or distress that may arise because of a failure to understand the child's sexual problems—to a short essay by Peter Wust on "Woman's Metaphysical Mission." This is probably the most valuable contribution to the whole book, possibly because it is not concerned with the narrowly "sexual" at all. Feminists, we fear, will misunderstand it and cry out angrily that its author would seek to re-enslave woman, but the dignity to which he summons her is something far higher than can be achieved by any mere assertion of a crudely conceived "right to be free." Woman's place is at man's side—as helper, almost, it might seem, his servant. But, in a profound sense, *servire est regnare*, and "her part in the world is to be a redemptress by love."

Of the other essays in the book little can be said in detail. They all bear witness to the essential sanity of the Church's view of sex, linked up as it is with her doctrine about the complete unity formed by body and soul. "There is a ceaseless and complete compenetration of psychical and physiological life: the whole life of the soul is an incarnate life, and it is incarnate in a body that has sex." In a word, they all plead, explicitly or by implication, that, as it is impossible to understand man in isolation from his sexual characteristics, so is it foolish to attempt to explain sex apart from the totality of the human personality into which it enters so integrally. It is much to be hoped, then, that these two books will find a wide public in Catholic circles, and especially amongst those whose duty it is to assist a bewildered world to understand its own nature and to show it how to grapple with its difficulties, not by unreasoning flight or by an unChristian prudery, but by the full acceptance of the absolute goodness and beauty of that Creation of God who is "holy in all His works."

T.C.

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T.C.

SHORT NOTICES

DOGMATIC.

THERE can hardly be any doubt that we have long needed an authoritative, dogmatic and ascetical treatise on **The Mystical Body of Christ** (Coldwell: 12s.), and at last Dr. Friedrich Jürgensmeier has supplied the need. The work is, quite literally, masterly, the work of a master. In an entirely satisfying way he surveys first of all the biblical and dogmatic ground, the analysis of the doctrine according to the teaching of St. Paul being quite the most comprehensive we know. In fact, it seems hardly possible to extend, or even to improve upon it. The author completes his survey by a short chapter on the relevant Johannine texts. He then proceeds to show the place occupied by the doctrine in the general scheme of Christian teaching, and here, though the layman unaccustomed to theological treatises may feel the going to be somewhat heavy, the theological student will find an admirable summary of the doctrine of the Redemption. The author then passes on to what is his main purpose, an exposition of the doctrine of the Mystical Body as the fundamental principle of the life of asceticism. His method is to take the main practices of the "devout life," and after showing how the Mystical Body draws life and being from the sacraments, he proceeds to develop the truth that its growth comes about by the individual's increase in perfection. He then discusses how all this may be achieved in practice, and concludes with a "supplement" showing the relation that exists between the Mystical Body and devotion to the Sacred Heart, to our Lady and to the Saints. All, then, who are serious in their practice of perfection should know something of the treasures contained in this book. It is true, as the author says, that "as the vital organic functions of the human body are not dependent upon the recognition and knowledge of physical laws for development and growth, so likewise the organic life-process of supernatural growth in the individual member of the mystical body does not depend upon the knowledge of his vital relationship to Christ." Yet the personal effort involved will be increased by the possession of such knowledge, and for this reason we wish Dr. Jürgensmeier's work the widest possible circulation.

APOLOGETICAL.

A series of conferences on the Church by E. Iglesias, S.J., have been published under the title of **El Reino** (Buena Prensa, Mexico: 3.50 Mexican dollars), now in a second edition. The course is remarkably thorough and forms a very satisfactory treatise "De Ecclesia Christi," in a far more readable form than

the usual seminary manuals. The style and treatment make the book a model of popular theology for educated readers. Pre-supposing the treatise "De Vera Religione" and the historicity of the New Testament, the author investigates the sort of "Kingdom" which Christ intended to found, and he convincingly refutes the theories of Harnack, Loisy and the Orthodox Protestants. The treatment continues on traditional lines, though the section comparing the "Kingdom" and the Church (pp. 73—78) opens up interesting perspectives. The study of the Petrine and other important texts is very detailed, but more use should have been made of the Epistles, and the writer is over-confident in putting the *Didache* before 100 A.D. The proof that the Catholic Church is the true Church of Christ is based on the Four Marks, but the direct method, *i.e.*, the consideration of the Church as herself a clear proof of her divine origin, is not completed. The last part, on the Sources of Christian Revelation, seems rather outside the scope of the title, but rounds off the book very satisfactorily.

HOMILETIC.

The Polish Jesuit Peter Skarga was a contemporary of St. Peter Canisius, and has not infrequently been compared with him. What Canisius did for Germany, it has been said, Skarga accomplished in his own measure for his native land. Born in 1536 and ordained in 1564, he was for a short time a canon of the cathedral at Lwów now, alas! in Soviet hands. He entered the Society of Jesus in Rome and began his noviceship at Sant'Andrea al Quirinale barely six months after his youthful fellow-countryman, St. Stanislaus Kostka, had died there. Returning to Poland in 1571, he rapidly became famous as a writer, social apostle and a preacher, both at court and among the people. It used to be said in Poland that, should you desire to become an orator, all that was necessary was to read and imitate Skarga. Unfortunately—at least from one point of view—the first volume of Father Skarga to be published in English reveals little of the expected verve and fire. **The Eucharist** (Coldwell: 8s. 6d.), admirably translated by Father Dworaczyk from the modern Polish version of Father Taranowicz, contains seventeen sermons on the Holy Sacrifice and Sacrament. "A distinctive mark of his [*i.e.*, Father Skarga's] style in the treatment of this subject," wrote Father Taranowicz, "is its simplicity, verging almost on the commonplace, yet not lacking in dignity." The several discourses are a straightforward and thorough consideration of the Holy Mass and the Eucharist: they are sound and well presented and, taken together, form an admirable study of that central element of our Faith and practice. The English rendering is a most capable one.

The sub-title "Little Talks to Little Folks" explains the purpose of **Angel Food** (Coldwell: 6s. 6d.), by Father Gerald T. Brennan.

The book contains thirty-one sermonettes which form a series of talks given at the Children's Mass. Their manner is bright and breezy but the normal parish priest might find it difficult to deliver them just as they are: however, they do mark a movement in the right direction. The talks are addressed to American children who are supposed to be familiar with Snow White and Popeye and the rest: but to English children of to-day such film-cartoon characters are not entirely unknown.

Volumes of sermons generally leave us cold. There are, however, exceptions to this chilly rule. Dom Lambert Nolle, O.S.B., offers us yet another volume of **Sunday Instruction Notes** (B.O. & W.: 6s.). He succeeds in blending the texts of various feasts and Sundays with a number of notes, and with certain questions and answers from the Catechism. The result is a useful compendium for those who prefer to have the matter of their sermons carefully digested beforehand. The notes are frequently most illuminating, and we imagine that the book will prove to be of considerable service.

DEVOTIONAL.

Good preachers are a rarity; and this may explain the popularity of books of sermons. Even if we ourselves seldom seem to hear sermons above the average it is some consolation to see them in print. **The Risen Christ** (Herder: 8s. 6d.) is a book of sermons on the Resurrection and on the Blessed Virgin, preached by Bishop Toth, of Veszprimia in Hungary, and a perusal of them enables one to realize why his sermons should have been translated into fifteen languages. (His present translator has served him well, but the ancient Italian people whom we know as the Volsci or Volscians look odd when called the Volsker.) There is charming directness and actuality about the Bishop's pulpit manner, and at the same time a grasp of the profound significance of the truths of our Faith—an alliance all too rare. An Index will help those who intend to use this book not so much for their own edification as to aid them in their own sermon-preparation.

In days as dark as these we need to be reminded of God's nearness. How valuable that thought can be? In **Avec Dieu Toujours**, composed by Père A. Desbucquoit and published by Lethielleux, we are given a number of simple but thoroughly Christian considerations upon His Presence. The fact of it, its nature, how we should steep ourselves in the thought of it—through prayer, a consciousness of duty and a harmony with the Divine Will—all this is dealt with. "Un livre très simple, sans phrases ni littérature": such is the author's modest judgment upon his work. As it stands, it will do much good: but its colloquial and somewhat personal style is more suitable to the French than it would be in translation.

A new saint or a new shrine invariably brings upon the reading

public a shower of booklets: all, doubtless, well-intentioned but not all admirably written. It would seem unlikely that, even at this comparatively early stage in the revival of Walsingham, any new book could do more than reproduce what has been already told us. However, Father Reany, in his **The Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham** (Sands: 1s.), has used the familiar material skilfully, and has amplified it with interesting details. The twelfth-century meditation would have been better given in modernized English, and not so closely interwoven with the author's foreword. This is a slight blemish in a book which provides an admirable guide to Walsingham at a price and size which make it suitable for any pilgrim's wallet.

ASCETICAL.

Psychology is becoming more and more a "fashionable" subject, and connected as it is with moral problems of every kind, it is one in which Catholics are bound to take a special interest. It is not necessary to underline the debt which Catholic readers owe to Dr. Rudolf Allers in this matter, and we welcome from his pen a practical treatment of **Self-Improvement** (B.O. & W.: 5s.). Those who are afraid that this may be a theoretical study can be assured at once that there is nothing at all abstruse or technical in the book, which is almost surprisingly direct and concrete—the result not of speculation about human nature, but of observation of human beings. True, as the author tells us, the work is based on a philosophy, but the philosophy is taken for granted and nowhere obtrudes. Starting, then, with the question, "Need we change?"—a question which we shall all be modest enough to answer in the affirmative!—Dr. Allers goes on to show that self-improvement is a possibility, and to suggest how it may be achieved. Believing that the first essential is to know ourselves, he then proceeds to hold the mirror up to our faults, tracing them back to their root-causes in ourselves, and showing their manifestations in external conduct, whether in the circumstances of social intercourse, work or religious life. The examples given are endlessly varied, being drawn from every sort of existence. Though the book is addressed primarily to lay people, religious will read it with no small profit to their souls, and confessors and directors, preachers and retreat-givers will find it a useful mine of practical "illustrations." In a sense it is a very "ordinary" book and, as the author says in his Preface: "Many a reader will feel, when perusing these pages, that he has been told nothing he did not know already. And he will be quite right. All the things detailed in this book are, more or less, known to everyone; but they are known in a dim and veiled manner. They have to be drawn into the clear light of consciousness for the sake of becoming helpful. To open the windows of the human soul is all this book can hope to achieve." But that "all" is considerable.

HISTORICAL.

In *La Persecución Religiosa en México desde el punto de vista jurídico* (\$5.00 Mex., or \$1.38 Amer.) obtainable from "Buena Prensa," Donceles 99A, Apartado 2181, Mexico, D.F., we have a compilation of the first importance for the study of the persecution of the Church in Mexico. The book traces the attempt to "regulate" the number of priests in the country, and it deals fully with the infamous decree for the "nationalization" not only of Church property, but even private property used, or *suspected* of being used, for religious purposes. A complete study is given of the anti-religious clauses of the iniquitous Constitution of Querétaro, and of the various State laws enforcing these clauses. This work is a monument to the anti-Catholic bigotry of Mexico's Masonic Government. It should be of interest to all who study the methods of those who persecute the Church, but to the student of the Mexican persecution it is invaluable.

From "Buena Prensa" comes a thorough examination of Pius XI's third Encyclical on the state of the Church in Mexico: *Comentarios a la Carta Enciclica "Firmissimam Constantiam" de su Santidad Pio XI hechos por varios Prelados Mexicanos* (\$2.00 Mex., or 55 cents Amer.). *Firmissimam Constantiam* may in time come to be regarded as one of the most important documents issued by the late Pope; for no other Encyclical covers such wide fields and touches on so many modern social and economic problems. An excellent translation of the Encyclical has been published jointly by the Catholic Social Guild and the Catholic Truth Society: *Catholicism in Mexico*, price 2d. This volume of "commentaries" from Mexico has local problems in view, but it is to be hoped that it will stimulate study of a document that deals with so many problems that have to be solved also by many other peoples.

BIOGRAPHICAL.

Sister Anne Hardman, S.N.D., is already known as the authoress of two volumes dealing with the history of English Carmelite convents in penal days. To these she has now added a third which introduces us to the lives of **Two English Carmelites** (B.O. & W.: 7s. 6d.) who entered the English Carmel at Hopland, Antwerp, during the seventeenth century. The story of the first of them, Mother Mary Xaveria Burton (1668—1714) is taken from her autobiography and from a manuscript volume, preserved at the Lanherne Carmel, and which was composed originally by Father Thomas Hunter, S.J. Father Hunter was almost an exact contemporary of Mother Mary Xaveria and also, for a time, her confessor. His account and her life are interesting, as much for the sidelights they throw upon the history of English Catholics of the period as for the detailed information therein contained of her

spiritual life. She was undoubtedly an excellent Religious, of lofty purpose and with considerable strength of will : and it appears from the narrative that she was favoured in a singular manner by God. The modern reader may feel that the old account treats too exclusively of signs and revelations, and adopt accordingly a critical attitude. Mother Mary Margaret Wake is the second of the two Religious whose story is unfolded in this book. Born in 1617, she died in 1678, and her body was exhumed and found to be incorrupt in 1716. Once again the account is based upon a manuscript life, also preserved at Lanherne, written by another Jesuit, Father Percy Plowden, who was spiritual director to the Hopland convent for many years. It is a record of great sacrifice, fervour and devotedness. The book is valuable in that it gives us an insight into the aspirations and outlook of two highly-gifted souls and consoles us with its picture of English Catholicism in persecution times.

No woman in Valentia in the fifteenth century was anxious to be told that she needed St. Vincent, since such a necessity was only a euphemism for ugliness, but few would hesitate to admit to-day that they needed this life of **St. Vincent Ferrer**, by Henri Ghéon (Sheed & Ward: 6s.). It acts as a spiritual tonic to come across anyone who takes the supernatural for granted, and St. Vincent, the learned Dominican with the gift of tongues, who could discuss the nature of Universals and convert thousands by his homely style of preaching, coloured the whole of his consciousness with the Faith. Miracles were a commonplace with him, and during the process of his canonization evidence was produced for eight hundred and seventy-three of them. Readers of this dramatic account of a dramatic life will find much to hold their attention, whether it be the story of the great Schism, which was brought to a close by St. Vincent as much as by anyone on earth, or the rise of the Flagellants, to whom St. Vincent gave a rule of life. There is a useful map to illustrate the vast field of the Saint's apostolate in Spain, South-Eastern France, Northern Italy, and Brittany, the scene of his death.

In **St. Clement, C.S.S.R.** (Sands : 3s. 6d.) Father John Carr has drawn a vivid portrait of his great fellow-Redemptorist, with a clear background of the complicated European politics of his time. It should do much to bring the Saint from undeserved obscurity in English-speaking lands. Few men have had so varied a career as he, and few have surpassed his strenuous efforts in the cause of the Church. Half German and half Czech, in turn baker's assistant, hermit, student and priest, with little learning and no capital, by the sheer force of a dynamic and saintly personality he established his Congregation in Northern Europe, and exercised so vital an apostolate from Warsaw to Vienna that its influence can scarcely be overrated. Living in the age of Napoleon and Goethe, he became the friend and guide of poets,

painters, savants and philosophers, and the revered father of students, servants, artisans and beggars. With an outstanding faith (he had, he said, a "catholic nose" and could "smell heresy"), a vital energy which rode gaily over such obstacles as the "Royal Sacristan" and political upheavals, and with entire selflessness, he gained an extraordinary power over souls. Father Carr gives amusing instances of this, including the conversion of the young Pantheist lecturer in Mathematics at the University of Vienna who, taken ill, was greeted by the Saint with the dry remark: "A piece of the Divinity is sick." The Church in middle Europe is now in a more parlous state than ever, and we can heartily reiterate Father Carr's prayer that St. Clement will see to it that the Faith triumphs in German-speaking countries long after its tyrants of to-day have vanished.

Slight and unpretentious, the late Cardinal Merry del Val's **Memories of Pope Pius X** (B.O. & W. : 3s. 6d.) are yet a genuine contribution to our knowledge of that saintly Pontiff. From the account of the first meeting at the Conclave of July, 1903, to the touching record of the Pope's last hours, the story is told with a simple directness which does not strive for effect, but achieves it infallibly. The Cardinal is not content to record his own impressions but brings forward evidence to show that the winning personality of Pius X conquered all those who were privileged to know him; whilst the brevity of the book does not prevent our seeing the many-sidedness of his gifts. For such a short book the price is somewhat high.

The life of the Curé of Ars is a familiar and an inspiring one to our generation. What he achieved during life and after death is little short of amazing. A slender volume entitled **A Shepherd and a King** (Coldwell : 6s. 6d.), by Anne Coyne, presents this at once hidden and eventful life to children. The story is told with vigour and simplicity in a manner that should appeal to those for whom it is intended. The illustrations are, however, somewhat unattractive : and the price, for English readers, is definitely high.

MISCELLANEOUS.

The death earlier this year of Sir Henry Lunn took from our midst a man who, though not a Catholic, was an admirable Christian, and had the cause of united Christian endeavour very much at heart. The symposia of distinguished speakers which he organized during successive Hellenic cruises are very familiar. Under the title of **United Christian Front** (Heffer & Sons, Cambridge : 3s. 6d.), the addresses, given at the last of these—that of February-March, 1938—have now been published. Naturally, the talks are uneven and, viewed as a whole, depressingly inconclusive. However, as Father D'Arcy, S.J., points out in one of the best of them, "they have called attention to the evils of the day, they have em-

phasized the need of a United Christian Front, and so have brought nearer the ideal of a unanimous conviction and showed each one of us the need of action." The Catholic point of view was kept well to the fore by Bishop Myers, Lord Iddesleigh and Father Sir John O'Connell. Sir Henry Lunn, introducing the gatherings, referred to the necessity for some common Christian outlook upon the Spanish civil war. That even on so clear an issue as this no complete uniformity was registered is evident from one set of remarks concerning the "decadence of the Church" in Spain. Mr. Barbour, arguing from Karl Barth, suggested that the unity required was one which "can only reach fruition in proportion as it welcomes and promotes diversity." Dean Inge who, on the Spanish question, has been quite on the angels' side, had a recurrence of an old complaint when he equated the Holy Father with Hitler and Mussolini in the matter of infallible utterance. The Dean of Chichester spoke of conditions in Germany, Professor Alivizatos voiced the Greek Orthodox attitude—reasonably enough, even when his criticism of the medieval Church be discounted—Lord Dickinson treated of the relationship of Church and State. There was talk of tolerance and good will, but the non-Catholic speakers had for the most part no clear notion of what they meant by the Christian Church as distinct from the various Churches. The unique position of the Catholic Church was scarcely considered by them. However, the book is interesting and stimulating even if one shuts it with the impression that, with all their good will, some of the speakers were at sea in a sense other than the topographical.

If a man were to pay a number of visits to Ireland, the West of Ireland, with a good camera and unlimited film, and, returning with a well-stored album, were to seek to tell of his experiences, he might produce such a book as **God in an Irish Kitchen** (Sheed & Ward: 7s. 6d.). But he would need to be possessed of an unusual power of observation, of sympathetic understanding and, not least, of a sense of style, to achieve the first-class work that Father Leo Richard Ward has achieved. There is no "story" in the book, other than the story of Ireland and of its humbler people, but the atmosphere of the book catches you and holds you as you are held by the atmosphere of, say, *Man of Aran*, when mere fiction might entertain but would not enthrall. We do not suppose that Father Ward would claim to have presented a complete picture of Ireland; but his sympathetic, keen-eyed portrayal of these "cultured peasants" may help others to some understanding.

To readers of *Stella Maris* the wit and humour of the Rev. B. Basset, S.J., need no introduction, and his Christmas pantomime **Cinderella** (Manresa Press: 6d.) is an excellent specimen of his craft. Full of topical allusions and homely references, it is all

very delightful fooling, and this story of the fortunes of Briant and May can be cordially recommended to any small (or larger) amateur dramatic society on the look-out for an inexpensively produced and easily performed antidote to war-time gloom.

If you are looking for some home-truths, you may find them in a small volume with the appropriate title of *As I See Me* (Coldwell: 4s. 6d.). The original is from the pen of Dr. Joseph Spieler, the translation adequately rendered by T. A. Rattler. The book consists of a number of short pages that offer us an examination of ourselves. Have we this or that other fault or propensity? Do we deceive ourselves in this or that way? There is a good deal of wisdom in the book, which should be read and pondered by anyone who has been deemed priggish or pompous: and those who flatter themselves that such epithets are not for them, will find searching considerations within. A useful volume for those who think that there is need for "debunking" themselves.

BOOKS RECEIVED

(Reviewed in present issue or reserved for future notice.)

BURNS, OATES & WASHBOURNE, LTD.,
London.

Mrs. Fitzherbert. By Shane Leslie. Pp. xxi, 394. Price, 15s. *For Democracy.* Edited by People & Freedom Group. Pp. x, 237. Price, 8s. 6d. *Morality and War.* By Gerald Vann, O.P. Pp. vi, 75. Price, 3s. 6d. *How to Love our Lady as did St. Thérèse.* By Rev. G. Martin. Pp. vi, 165. Price, 5s. *The Personality of Christ.* By Abbot Anscar Vonier, O.S.B. Pp. viii, 275. Price, 6s. *Perfection Through Patience.* Extracts from Archbishop Ullathorne. Pp. 53. Price, 1s.

CATHOLIC MISSION, Wei-Hai-Wei,
China.

A Missionary Compendium. By F. Fidelis Chicoine, O.F.M. Pp. viii, 115.

COLDWELL, London.

Ignatian Meditations. By J. E. Moffatt, S.J. Pp. 178. Price, 5s. *Nervous Mental Diseases.* By Chrysostomus Schulte, O.M.Cap. Pp. 343. Price, 10s. 6d. *The Mystery of the Divine Motherhood.* By Charles Feckes. Pp. 191. Price, 5s. 6d.

FLAMMARION, Paris.

La Vérité sur l'Armée allemande. By Dr. Ivan Lajos. Pp. 181. Price, 12.50 fr.

LIBRAIRE CASTAIGNE, Brussels.

Bibliographie de Maurice Maeterlinck. By Maurice Lecat. Pp. 207.

LIPPINCOTT Co., Chicago.

Cognitive Psychology. By Dom Thomas Verner Moore. Pp. 636. Price, \$3.75.

LONGMANS, GREEN & Co., London.

Death's Other Kingdom. By Gamel Woolsey. Pp. xi, 204. Price, 6s. n. *Saint Just.* By J. B. Morton. Pp. xxi, 332. Price, 15s. n. *Fifty Years of Psychical Research.* By Harry Price. Pp. ix, 383. Price, 10s. 6d. n. *Our Case.* By Christopher Hollis. Pp. 63. Price, 1s. 6d. n. *The Descent of the Dove.* By Charles Williams. Pp. ix, 245. Price, 7s. 6d. n.

ROUTLEDGE, London.

The Nazarene. By Sholem Asch. Pp. 722. Price, 8s. 6d.

SANDS & Co., London.

Shepherds of Bethlehem. By Mary Winter Were. Pp. 238. Price, 6s. n.

SHEED & WARD, London.

St. Vincent Ferrer. By Henri Ghéon. Pp. xv, 190. Price, 6s. n. *European Notebook.* By Bernard Wall. Pp. vi, 229. Price, 7s. 6d. *How Firm a Foundation.* By W. D. Nutting. Pp. 174. Price, 6s. n.

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